

Chapter 3: First Contact





SFX: Scratch

Huh..?

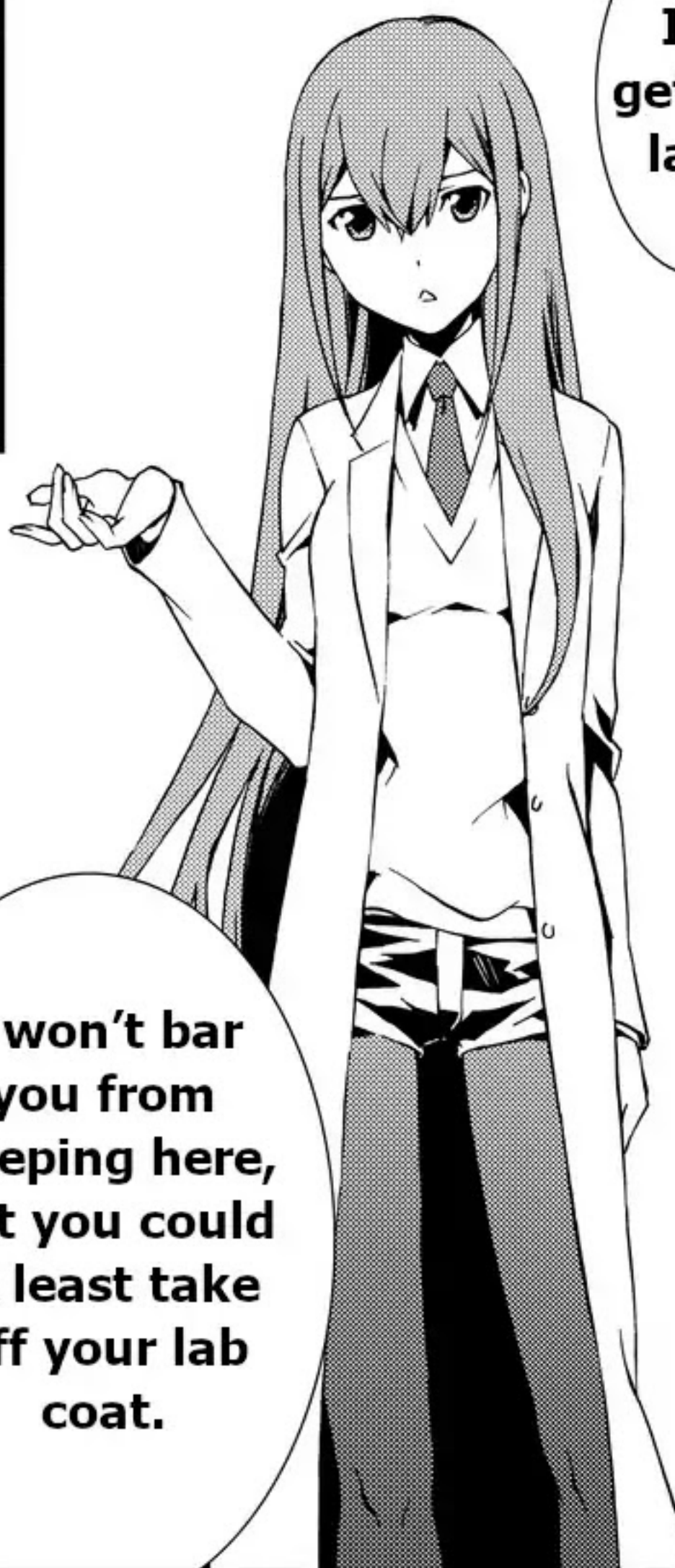
Mio!

SFX: Shake

All I'm doing is following your perfect example.



It's getting late.



Submitted by referral, no less. When did you even lay the groundwork for that?

That is quite the thing to say after you surprised me with that paper during my presentation at today's conference.

And? How'd it do?



I won't bar you from sleeping here, but you could at least take off your lab coat.

And you?

Tch

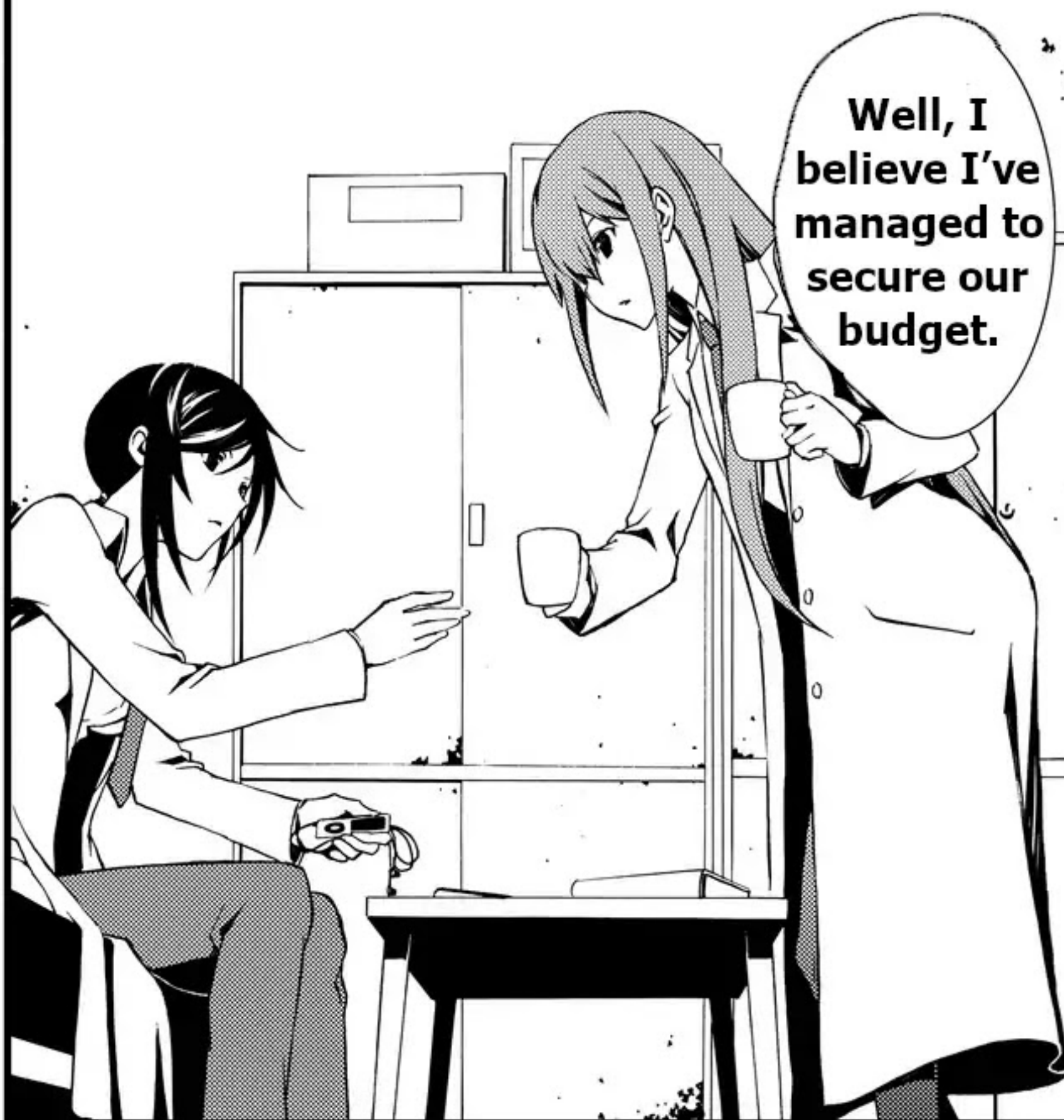


Was the general consensus.

"Well written, but could use a bit more data and inquiry,"



One year
had
passed
since I
met
Makise
Kurusu.



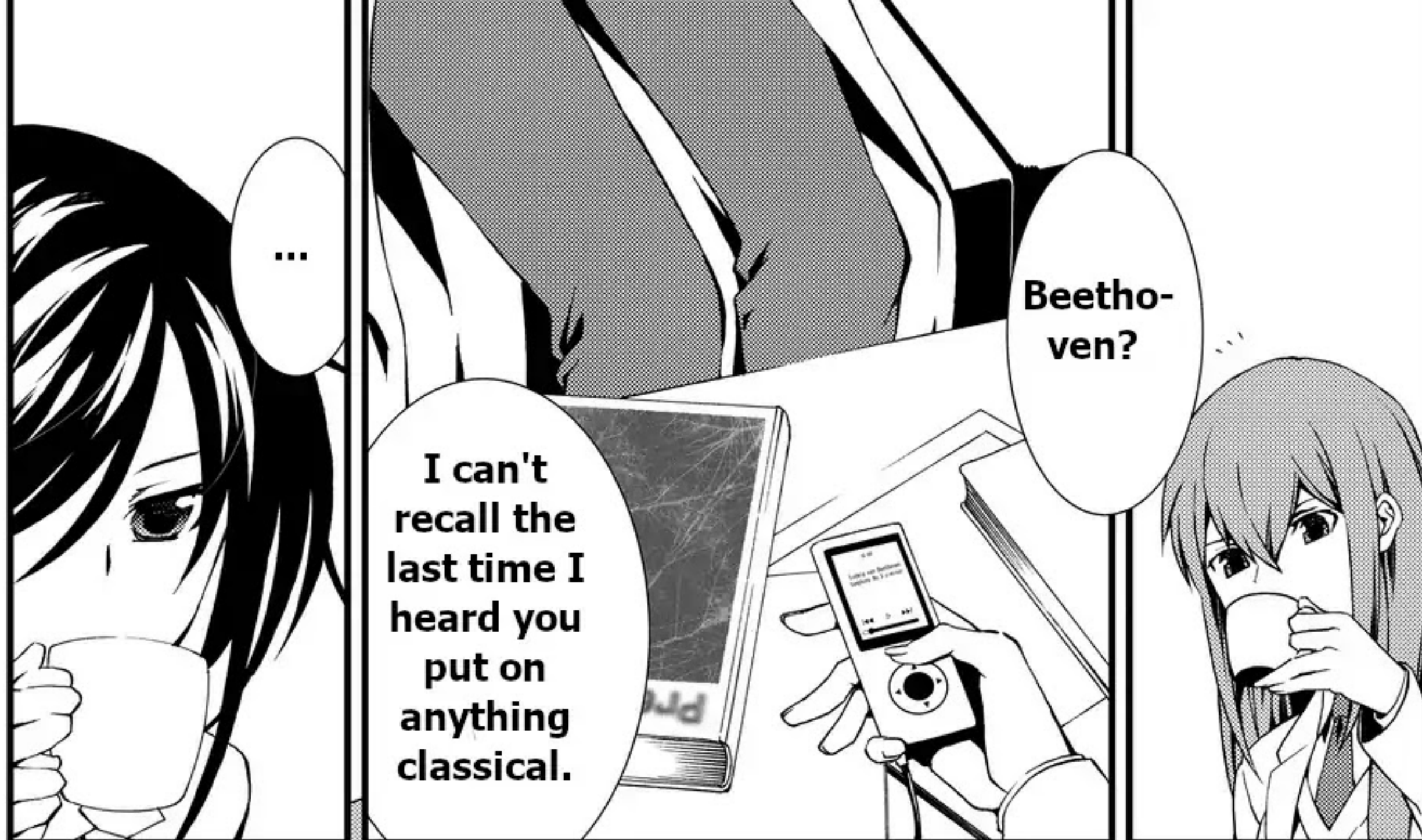
Well, I
believe I've
managed to
secure our
budget.



I still
showed up
at high
school now
and then,

But I mostly
hung out in
Kurusu's lab
as a non-
matriculated
college
student.





* Jakob von Uexküll, a German biologist and philosopher, who introduced the idea of the umwelt, or the subjective world-view.

Musicians have often viewed this as bizarre.



Even after Beethoven grew hard-of-hearing, his compositions continued to be masterpieces.

What's more, he never knew more math than basic addition.

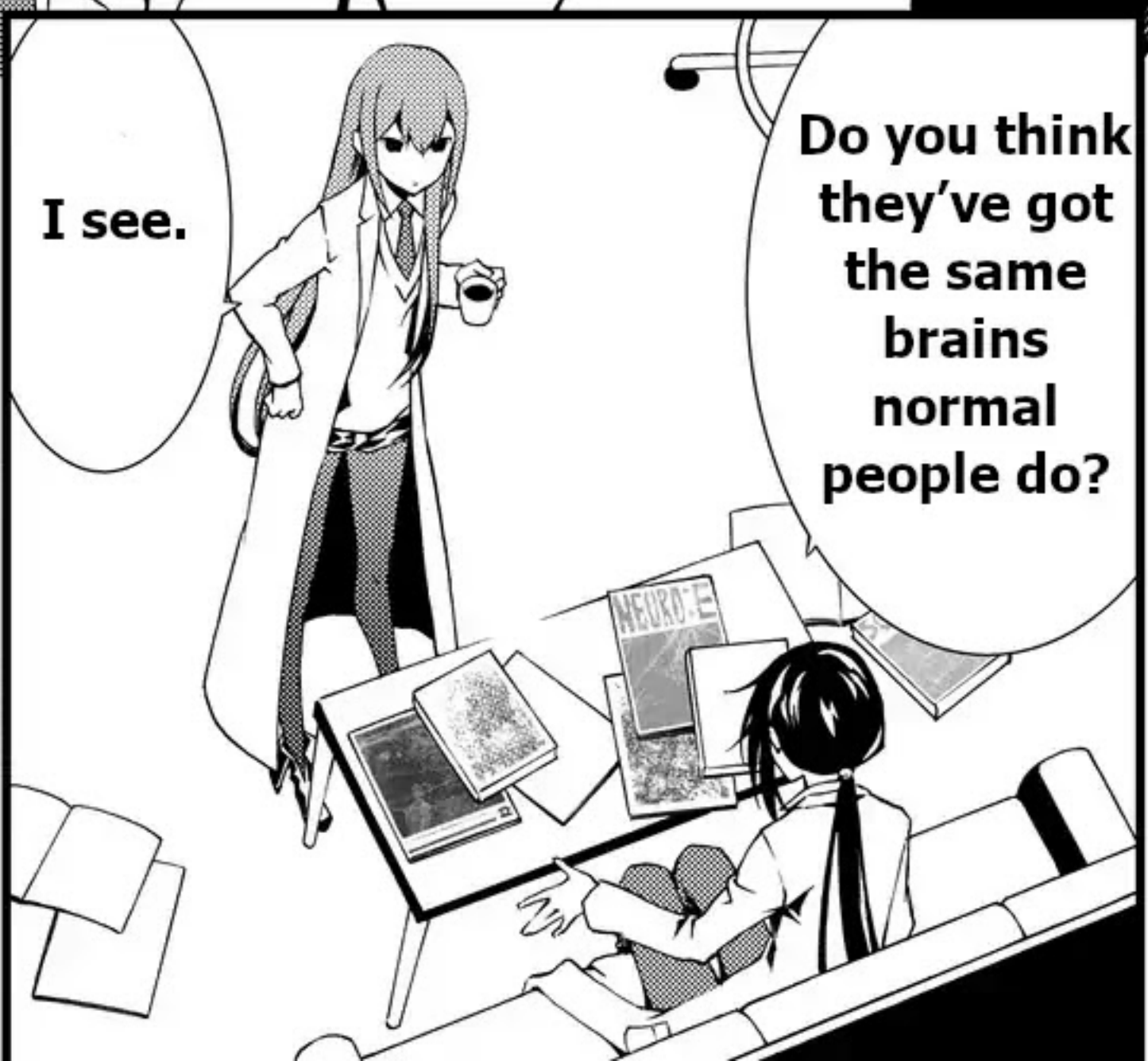


And Mozart: he's supposed to have paced around his room even while washing his face in the morning.

I wanna know what world it was they saw, the one other people can't.

I see.

Do you think they've got the same brains normal people do?



Thus Knocks Destiny at the Door

Though
who
knows if
it's true.

*Symphony
No. 5*

Someone
wrote
Europeans
knock on
doors in a
four-beat
pattern
because of
Beethoven's
Destiny.

And?
Did you
learn
anything
?

As if this
stuffy old
music could
teach me
anything.

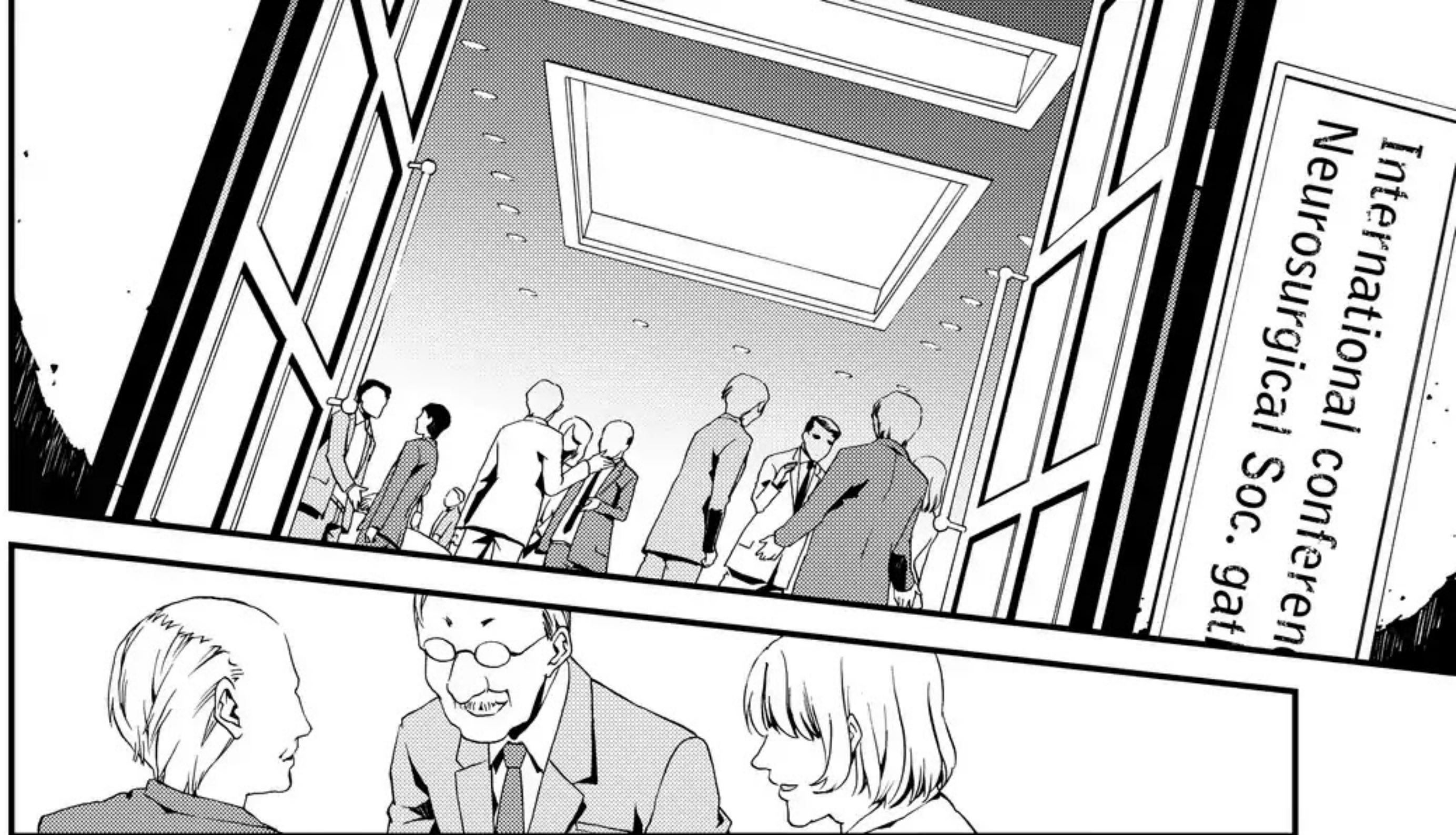
...Is
that
all?

Now then.
I'm heading
out. Come
along, please.

You need to
let yourself
get a bit
more used
to this sort
of thing.

?





Sigh...

...Why am I even here?



Perhaps I'd feel a little more bad for you if you weren't wolfing down all that food.



Then why'd you drag me a—

Besides, didn't you once tell me you'd rather spend an hour talking to a wall than go to an academic social?

Some of us aren't rich.



Miss Makise!

But our lab's sponsors are here, so I had to come.

I'm not here by choice either.





You've
found
yourself
a wall.



Hah
...



Urgh... That's
enough out
of you!

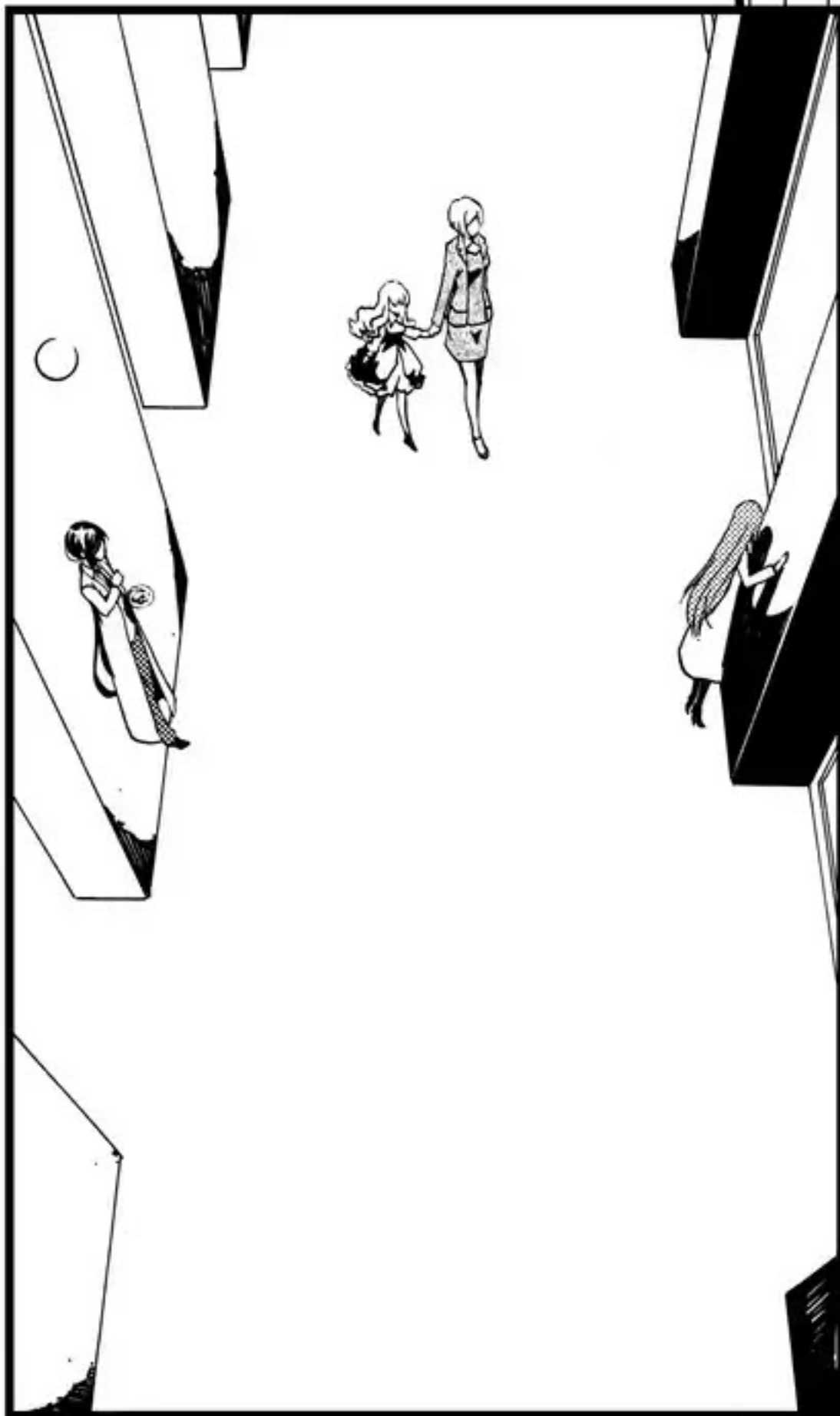
You're the one
not used to
stuffy high
society.

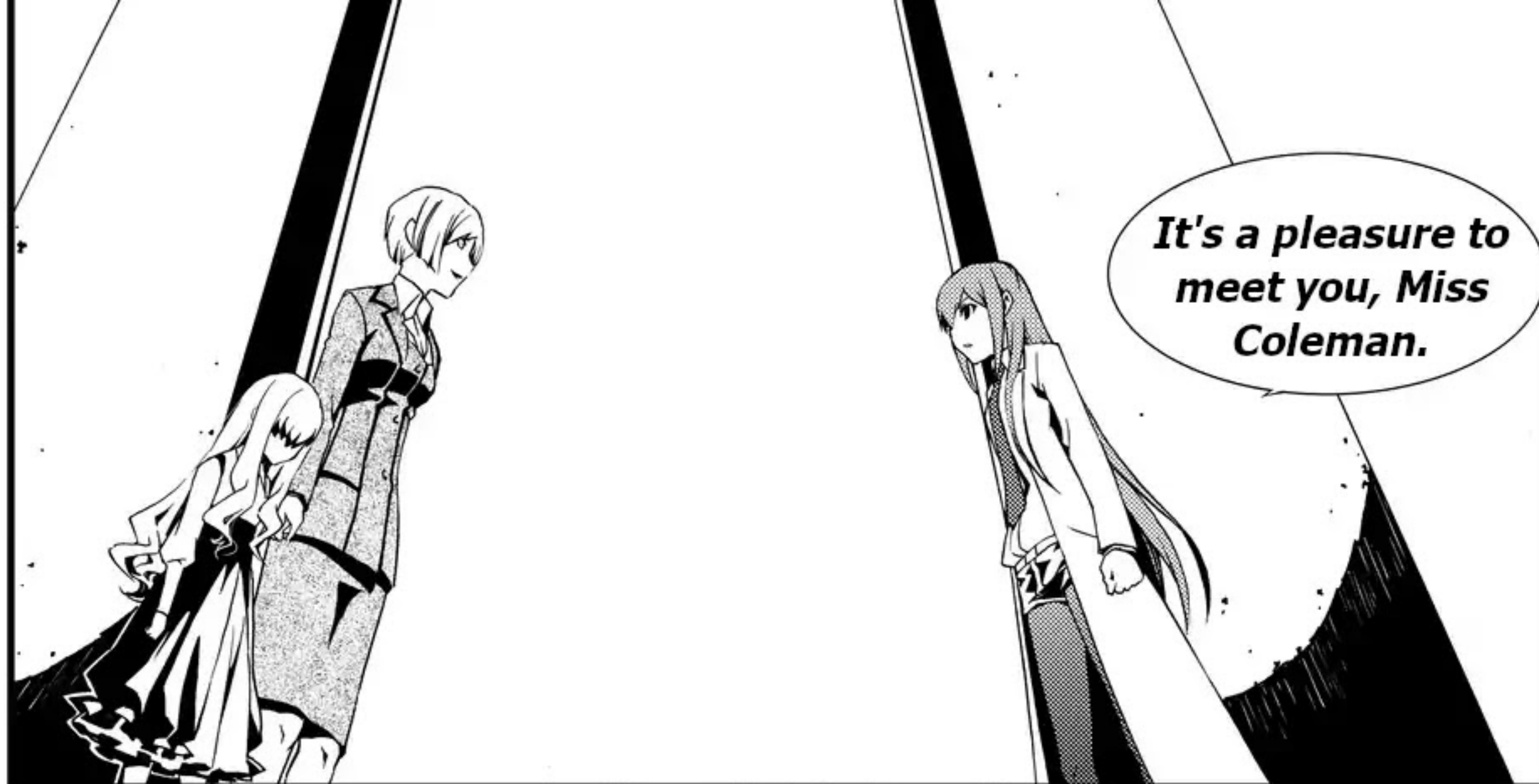


**WHAT
NOW?!**

Miss Makise?







It's a pleasure to meet you, Miss Coleman.



Your presentation was wonderfully intriguing, and rather stimulating.

I'm honored to see you've heard of me.





And yet, your budget! It appalls me. The University lacks proper appreciation for your work.

If you are ever in trouble, feel welcome to visit me. As a fellow researcher, you have my support.



...No, there are still too many details I am yet to handle properly.

But that is very kind of you to offer.



SFX: Rumble





What was that?

--Please, I would love a visit from you sometime.

You need simply show the doorman my card. By all means, please.

Chief Executive Officer
Claire Coleman
Coleman Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience
100 Main Street, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10001
Phone: (212) 555-1234



...I have no idea.

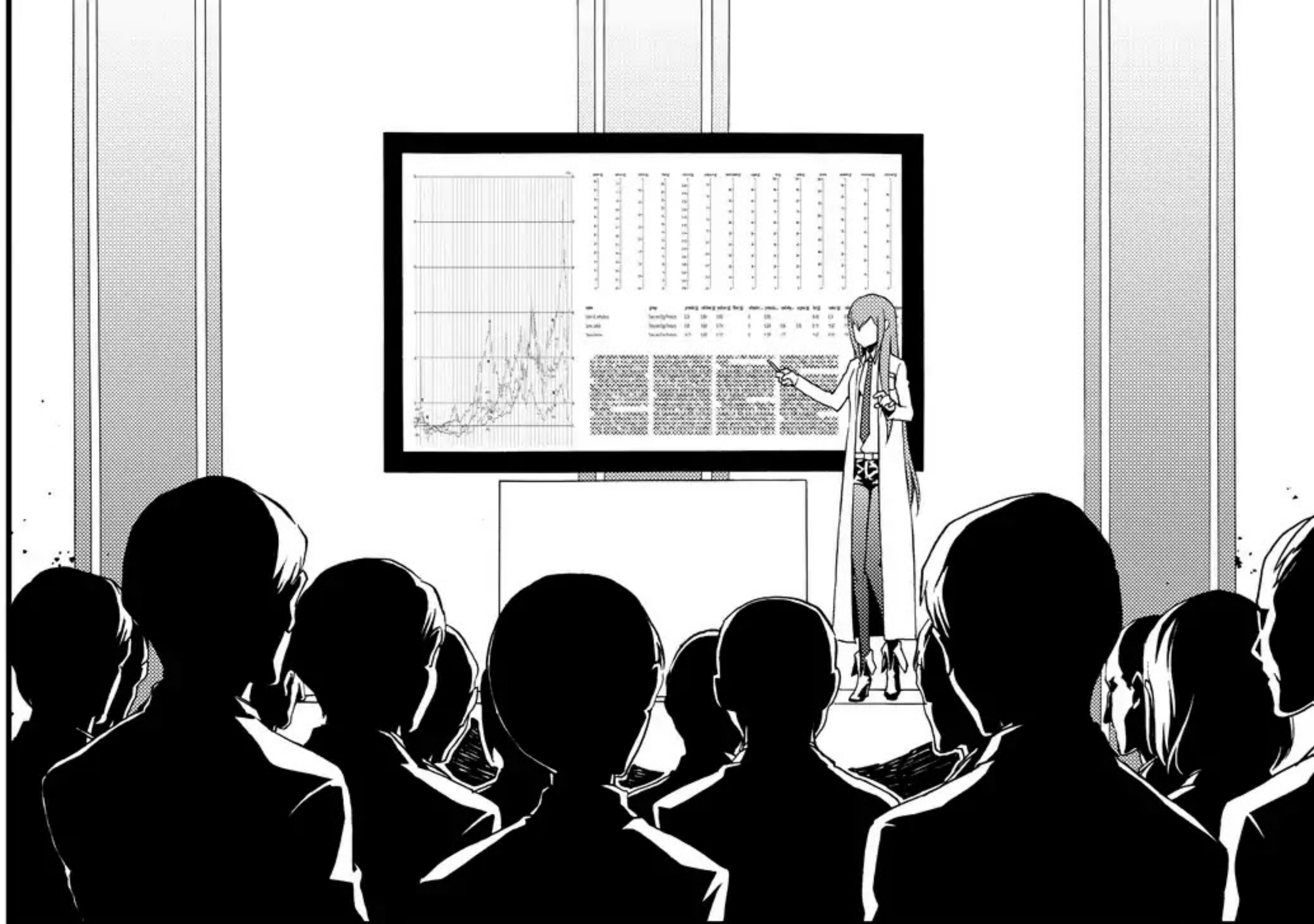
She's the head of the Coleman Institute for Cognitive Neuroscience.

Claire Coleman.

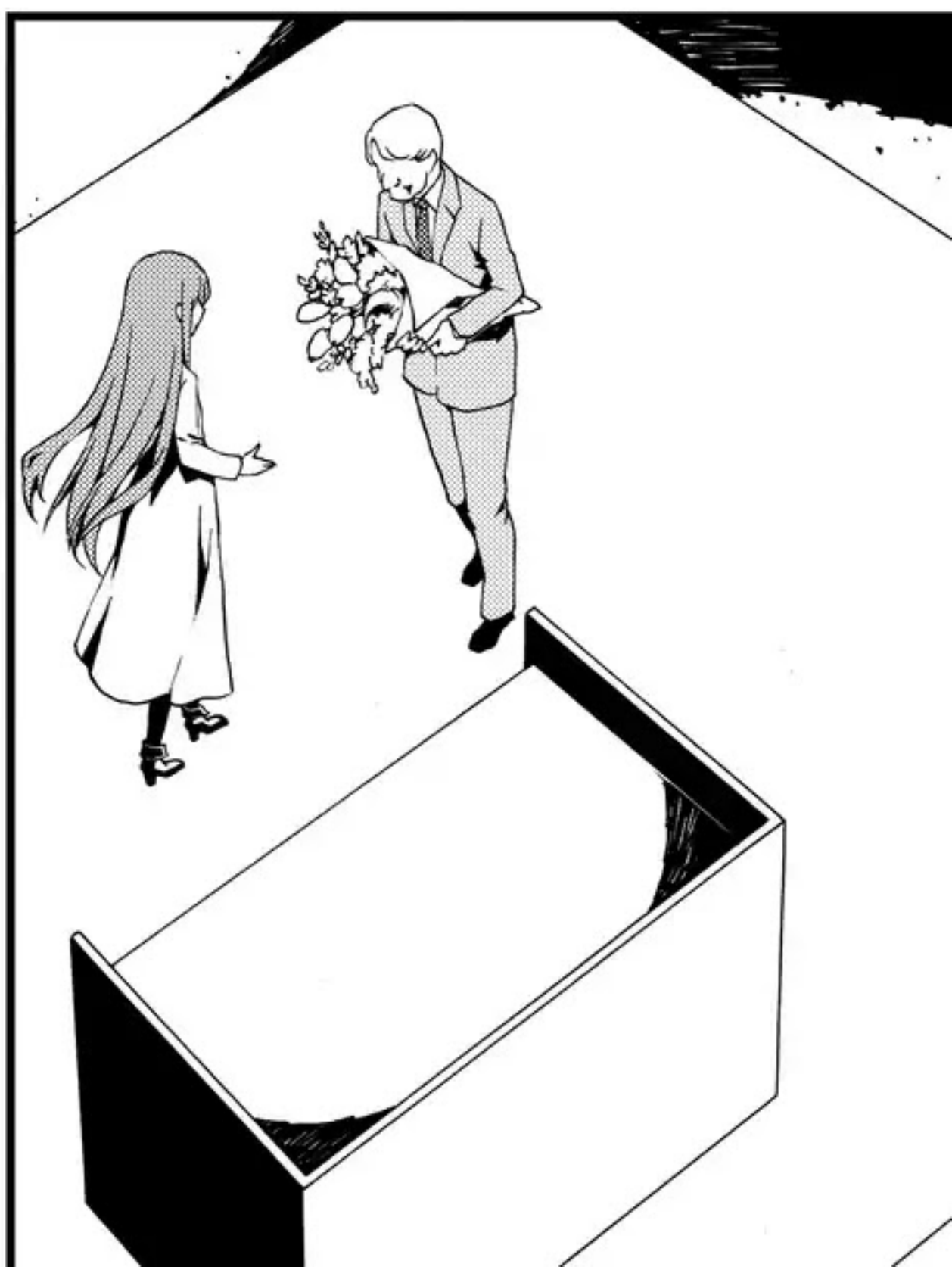
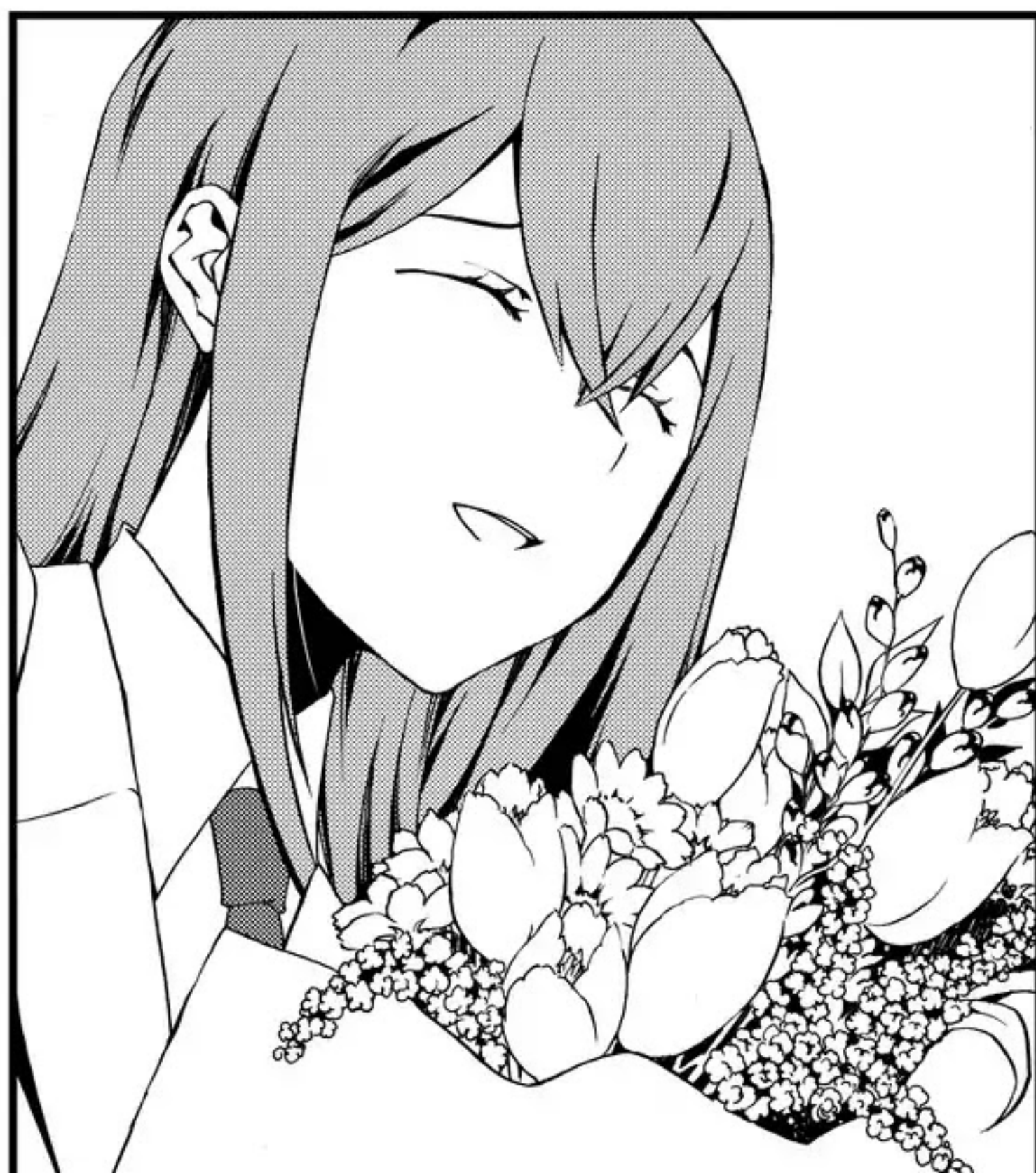
SFX: Slip

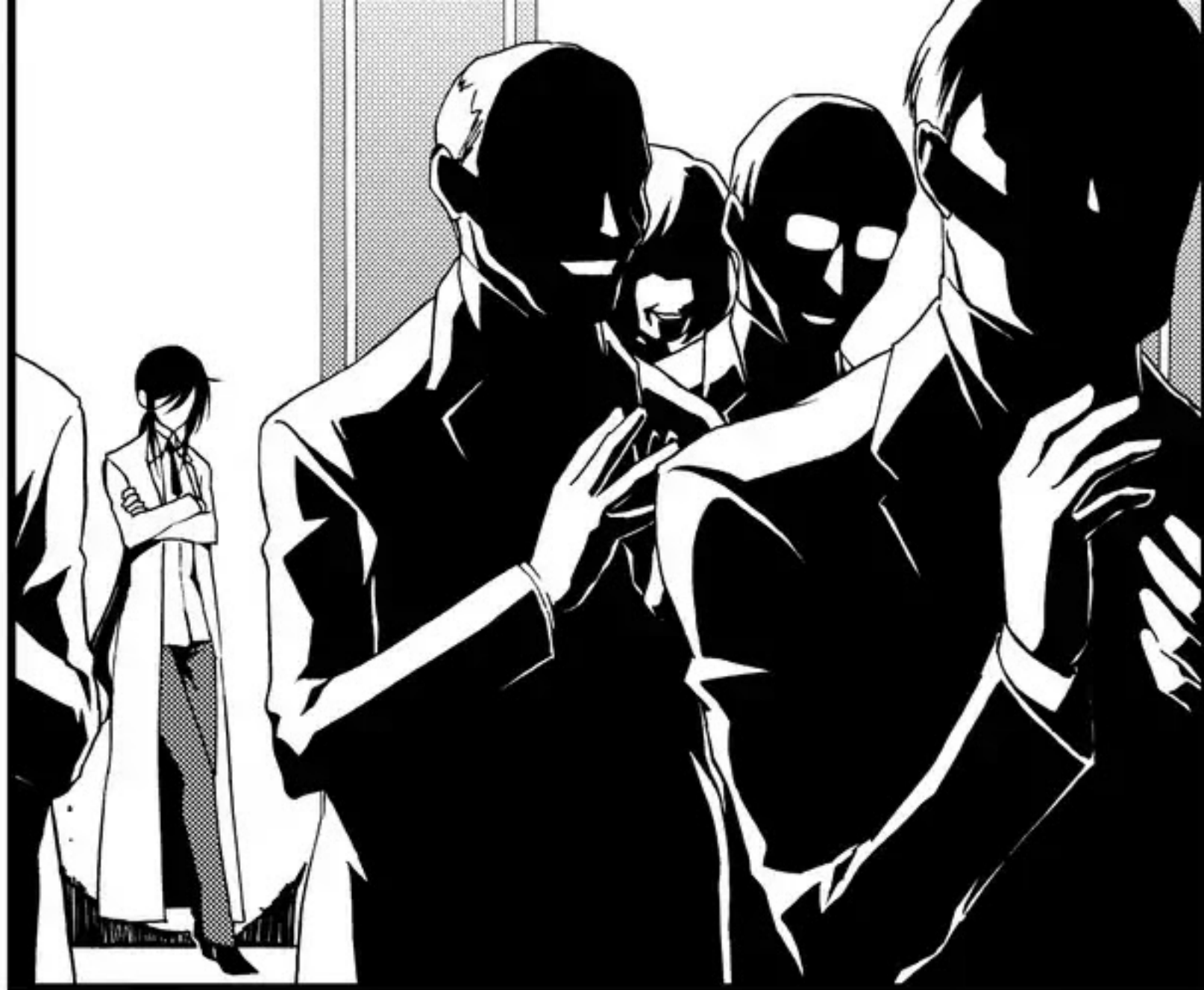
And the kid?





SFX: Clap



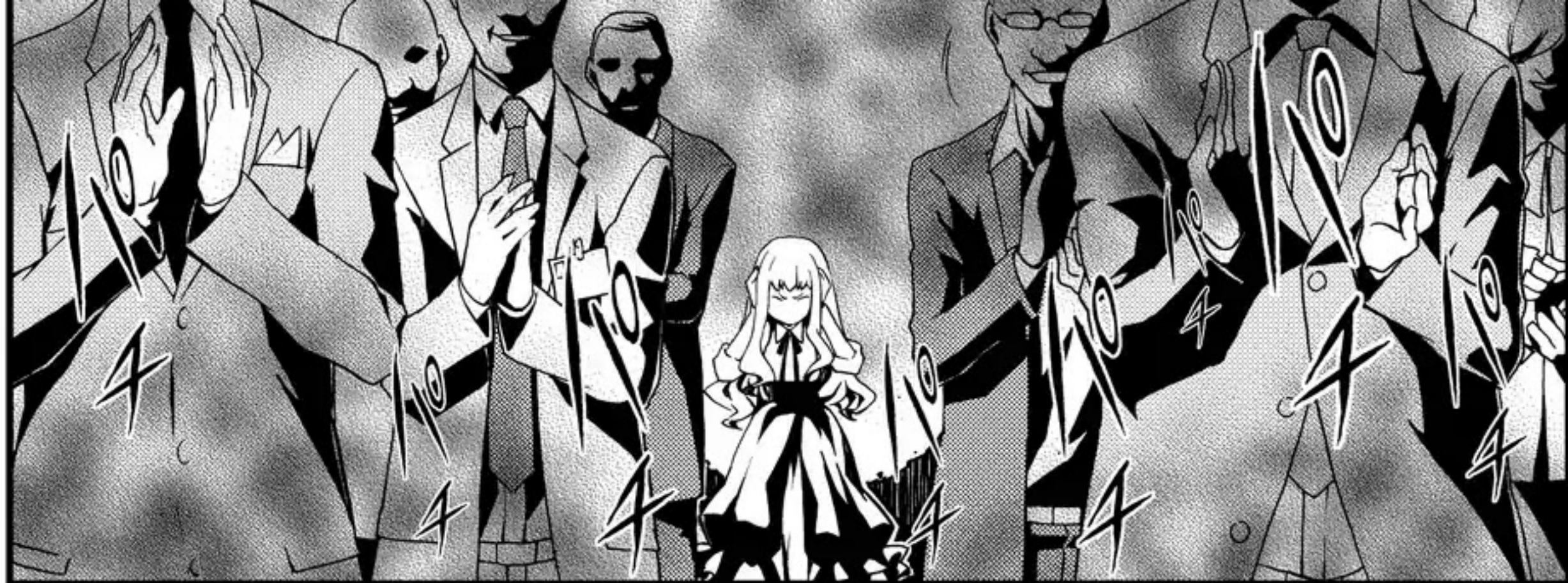


She's so far.

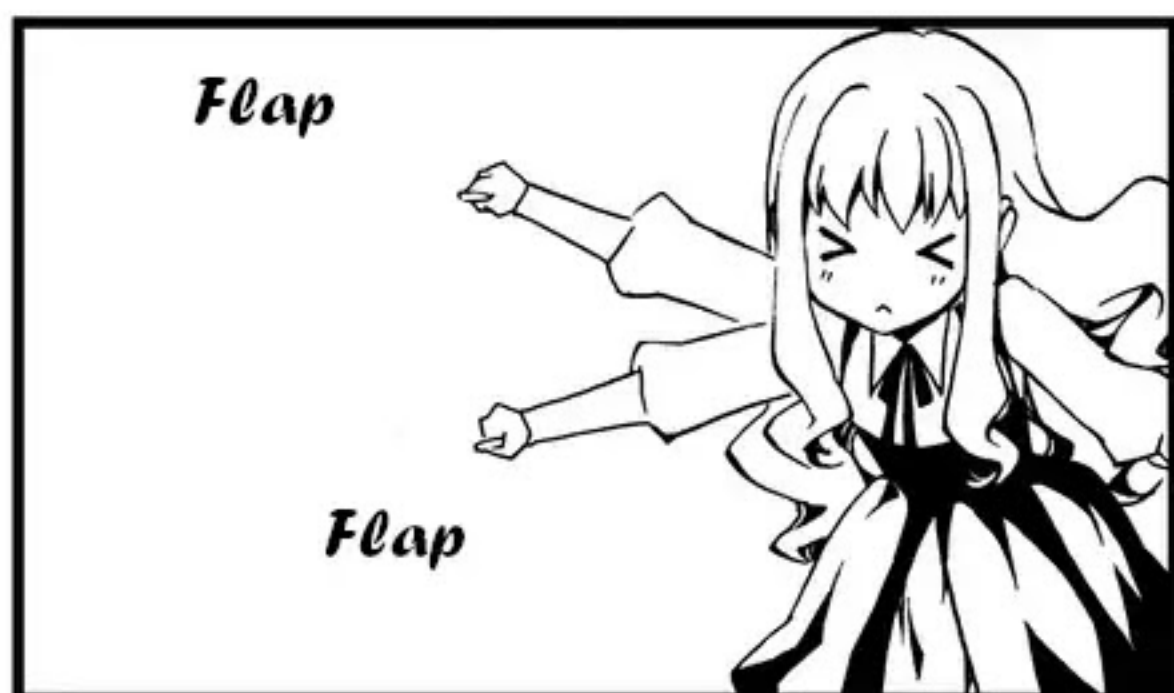


International Conference
Neurosurgical Soc. gather

SFX: Clap



SFX: Clap





SFX: Clap

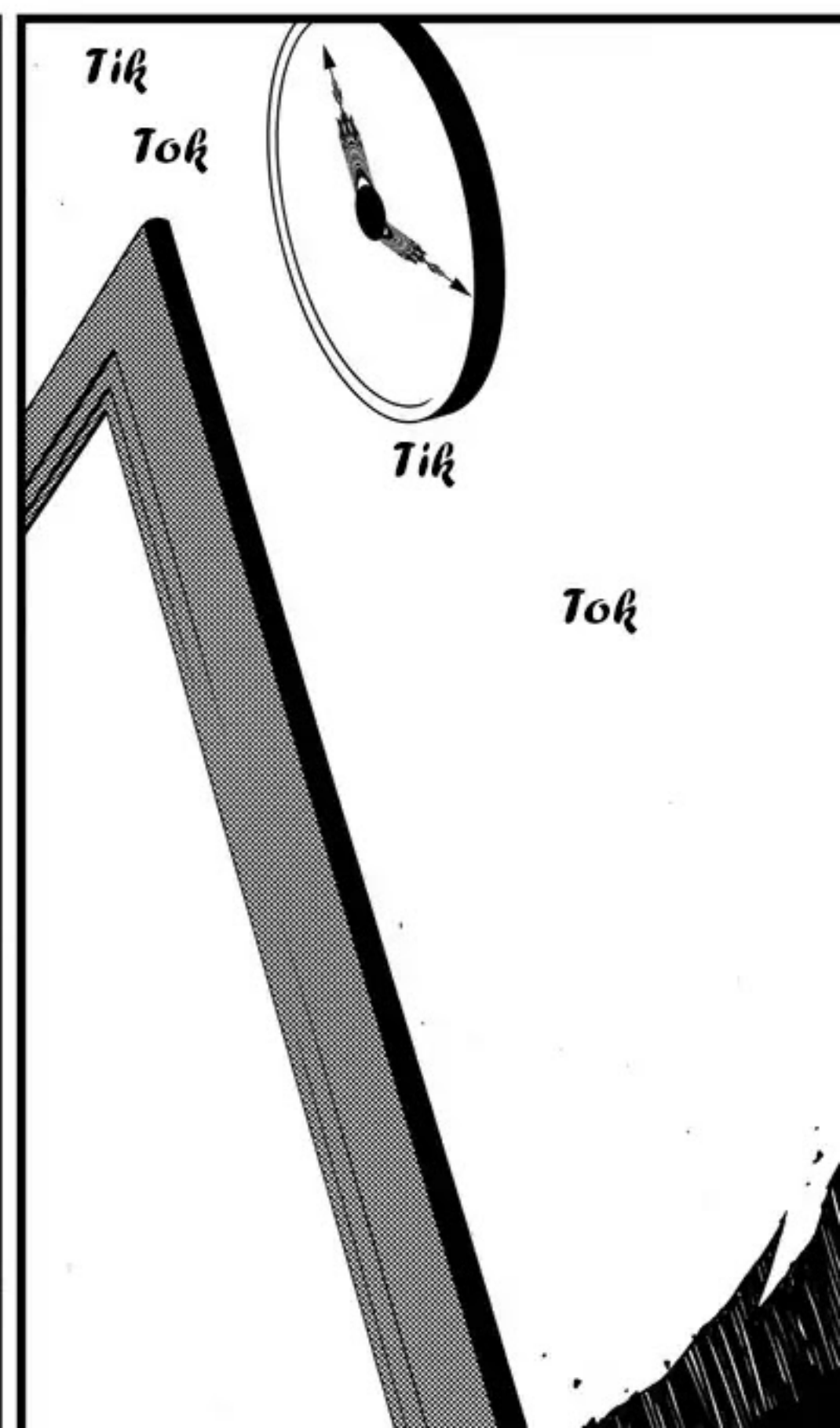
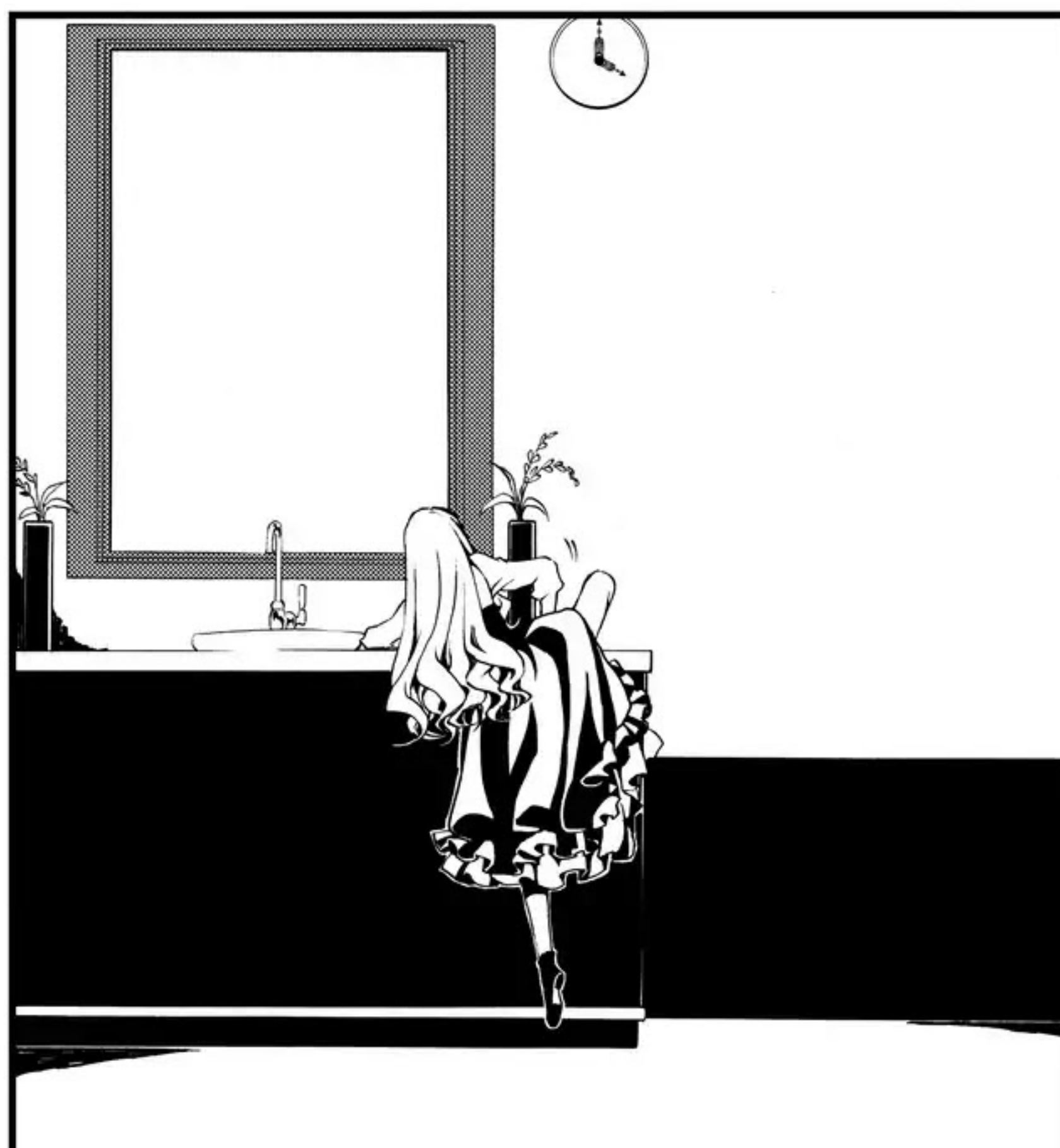
SFX: Ooh

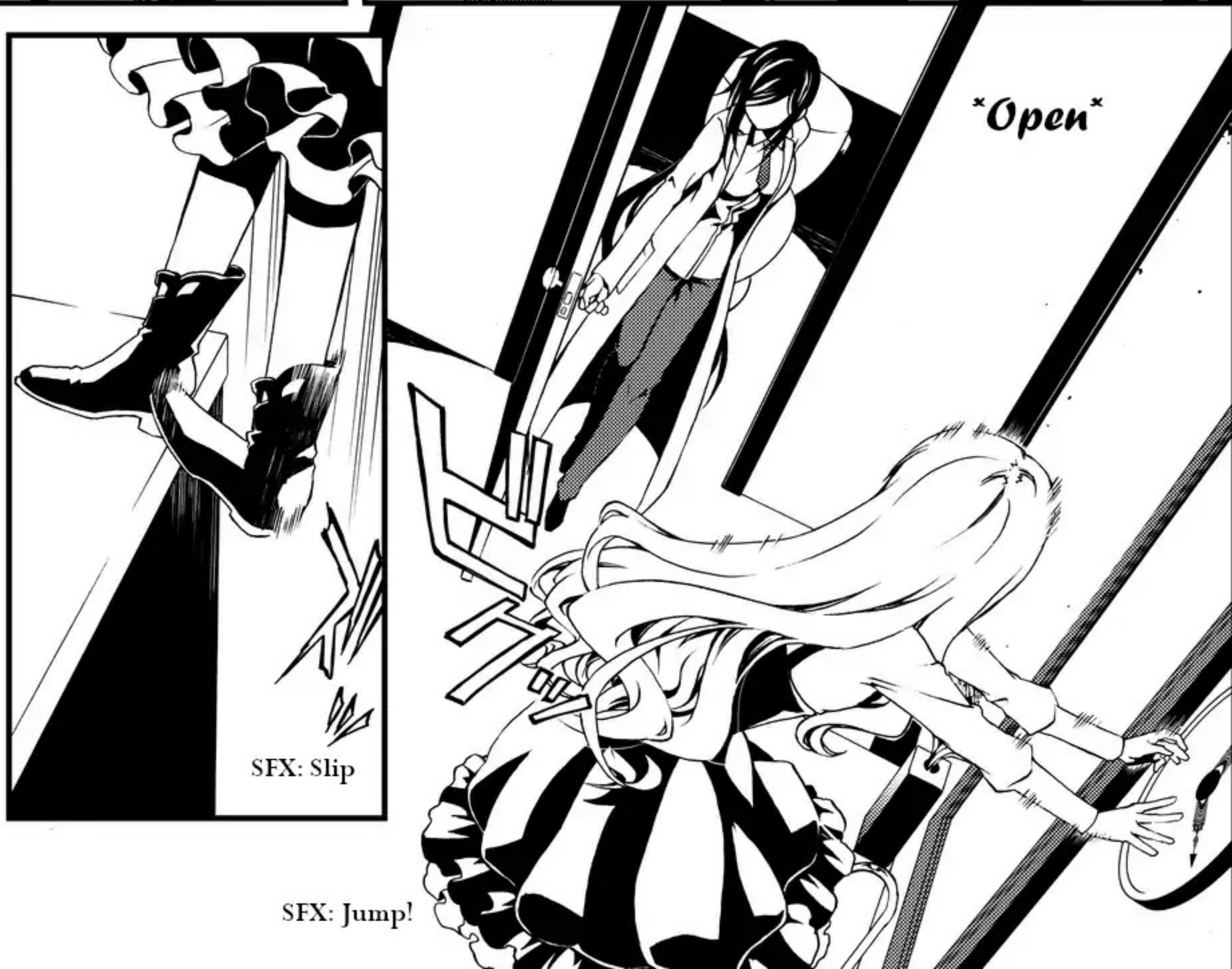


BETH!



SFX: Dash!







SFX: CRASH



SFX: Rattle



Creeeeeeeek

Hey!
What's
wrong?!

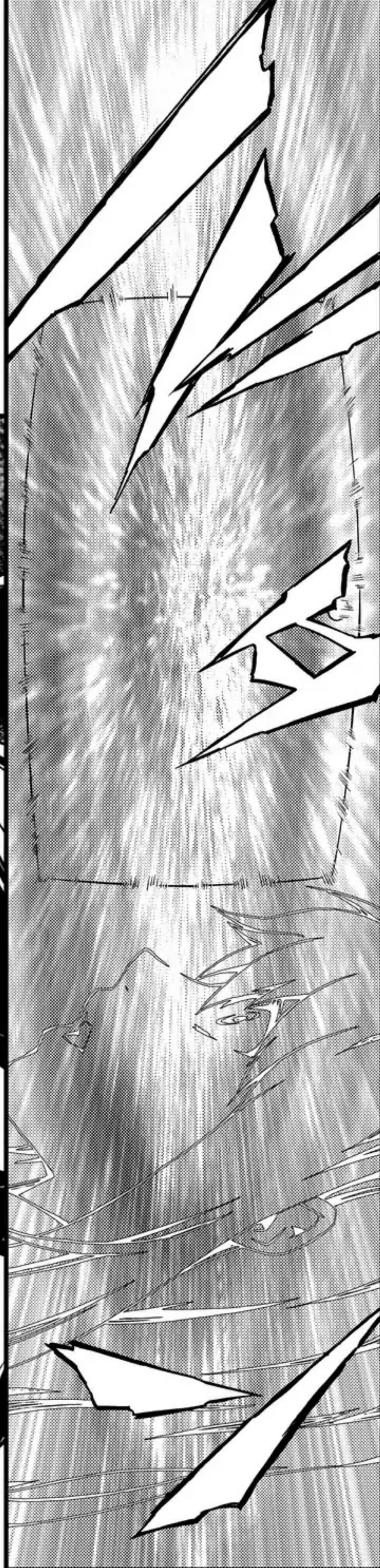


Kid,

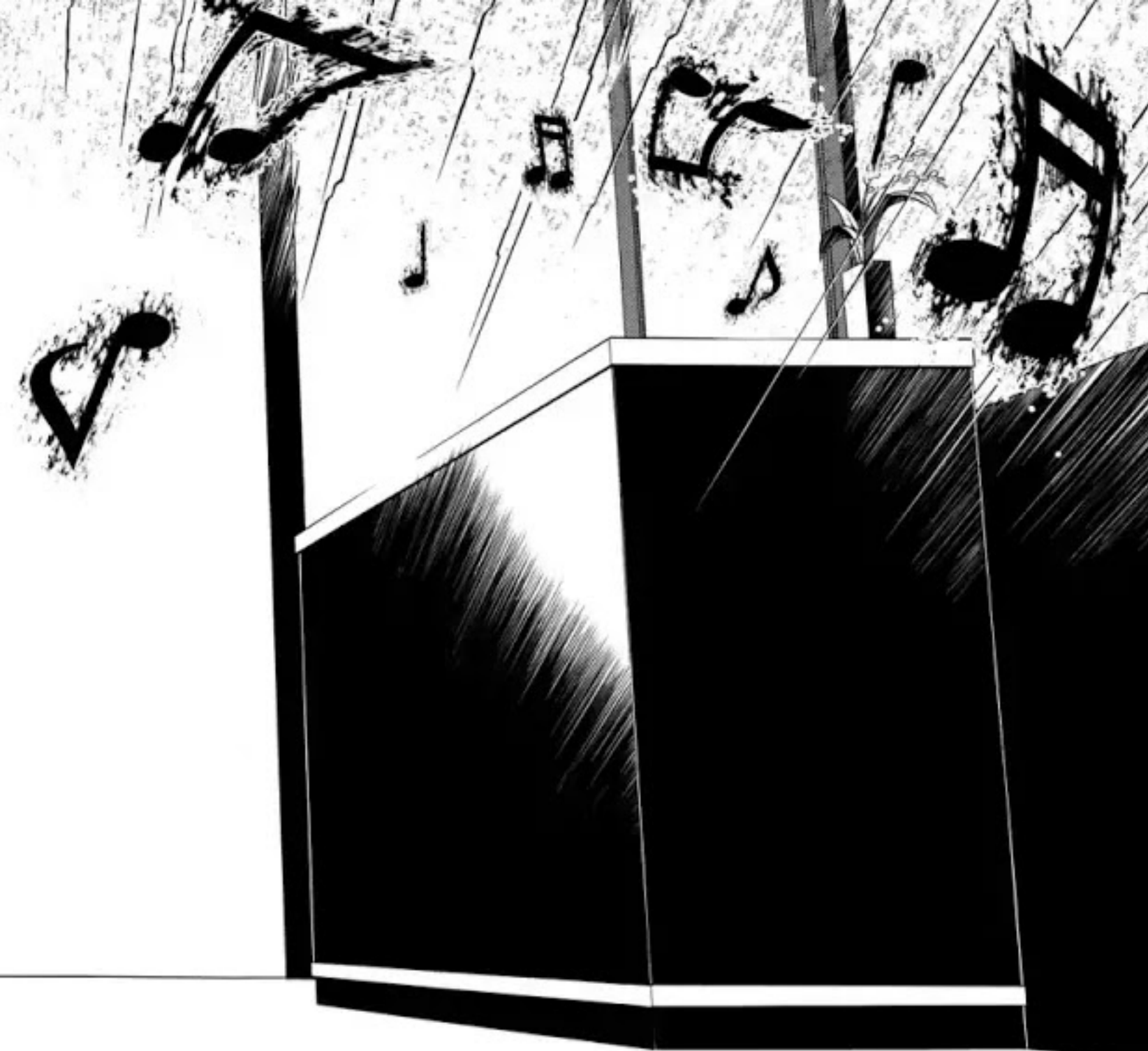
Are
you
alright
?!



No... Stop...



SFX: SLAM!

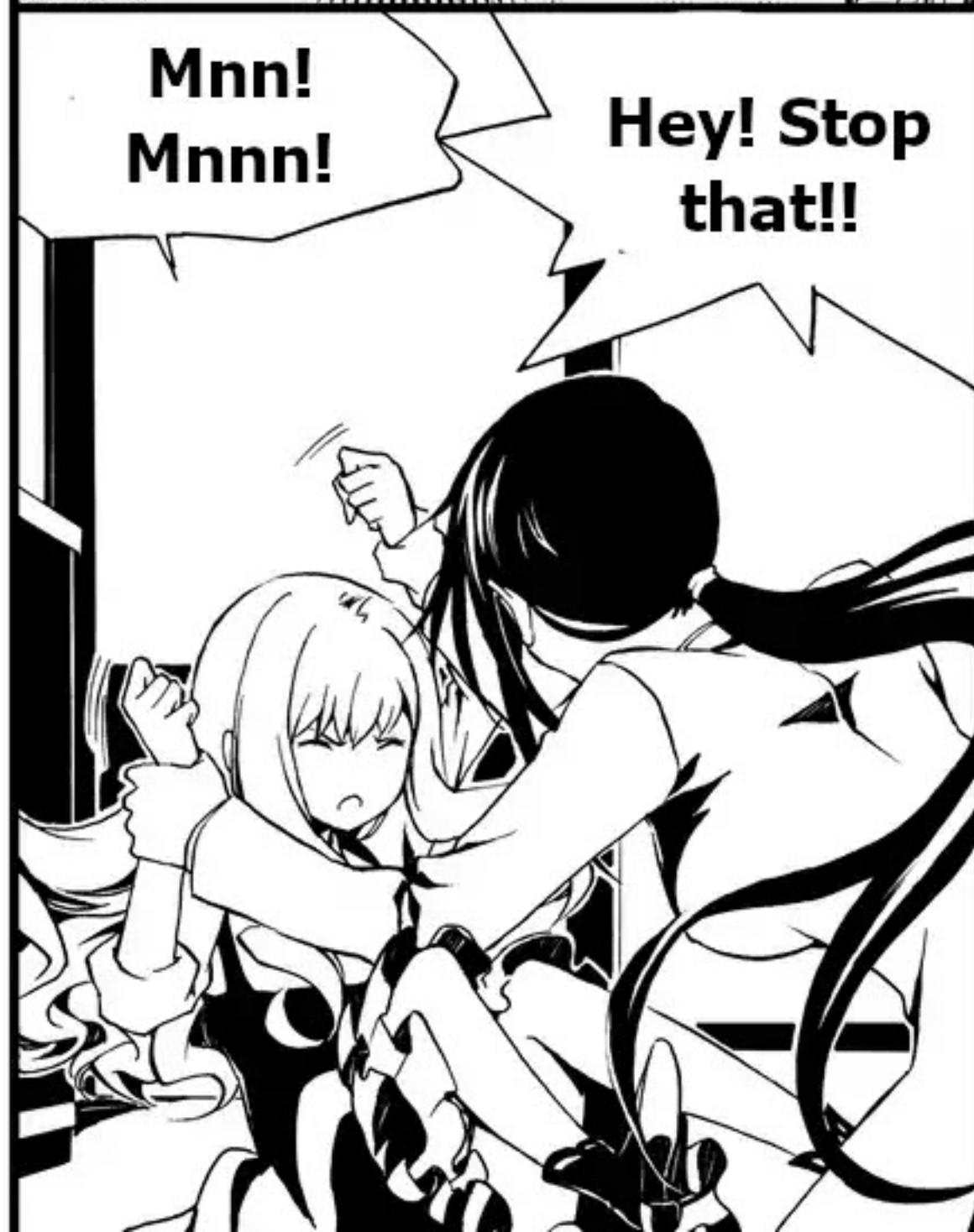




SFX: Silence



It
stopped...?



Mnn!
Mnnn!

Hey! Stop
that!!



SFX: Bite



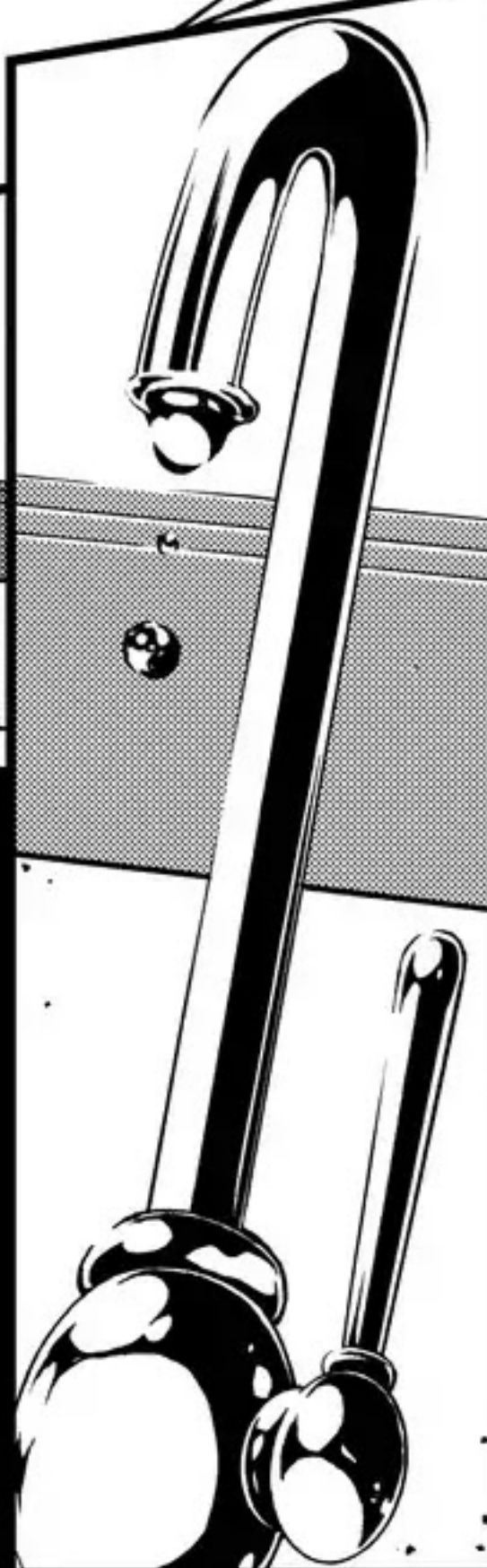
SFX: Grab



So that's
what's
going on!



SFX: Drip



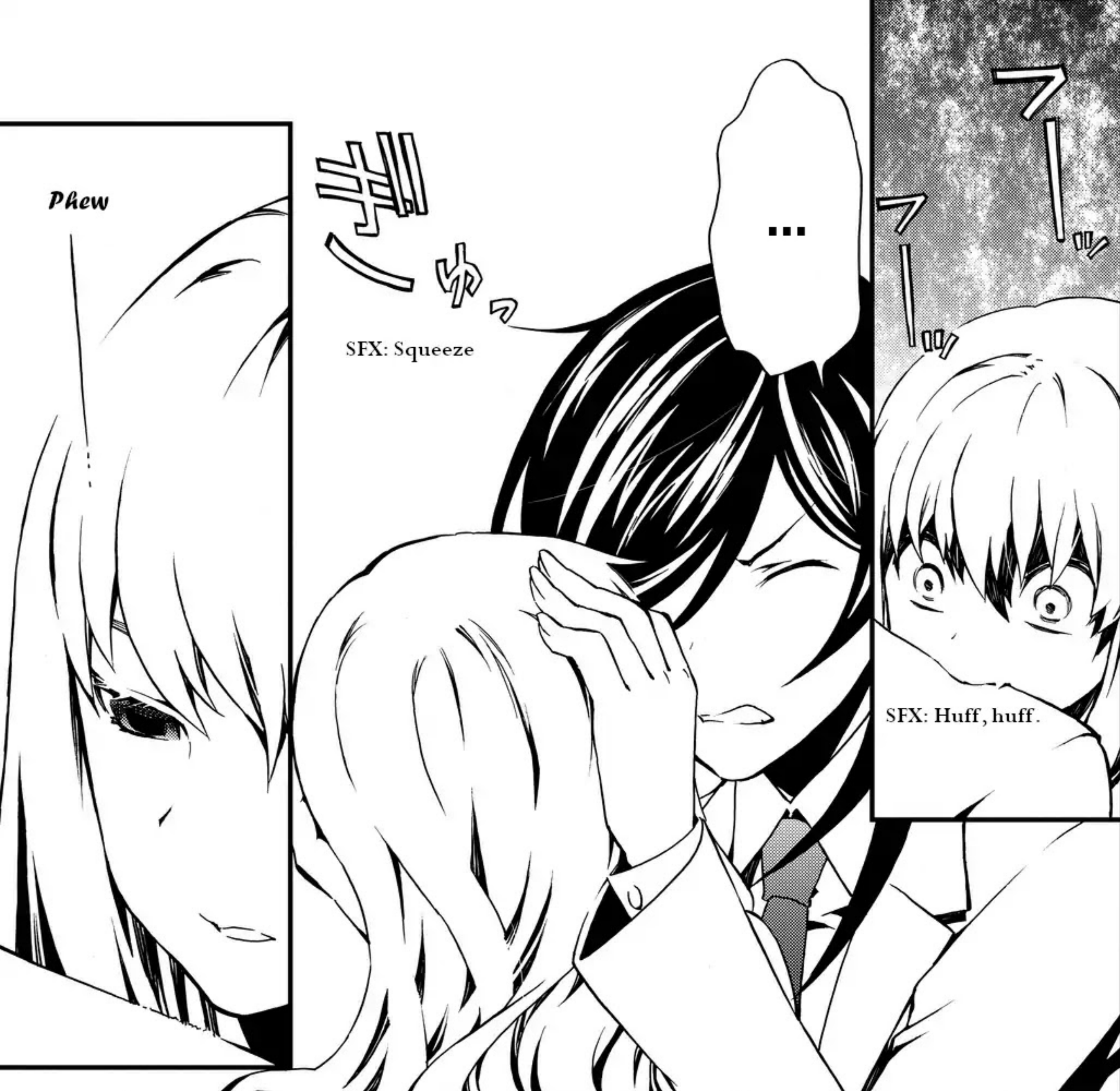
SFX: Twitch



Beth!

Beth!





Pheew

≡
/ ㇏

SFX: Squeeze

...

㇏
㇏
㇏

SFX: Huff, huff.



**A panic attack
from auditory
overstimulation?**



**Weren't you
Miss Makise's...**

**I'm so sorry for
any trouble she
caused. Are you
alright?**



Umm, let
me treat
you.

Forget me.
More
importantly
...

SFX: Scritch-scratch

But it looks like the
noise-canceling
headphones she had to
play her favorite
sounds broke.

I brought her along
today in order to help
develop her life skills,

...Yes.



What was
that sound I
heard a
second ago?

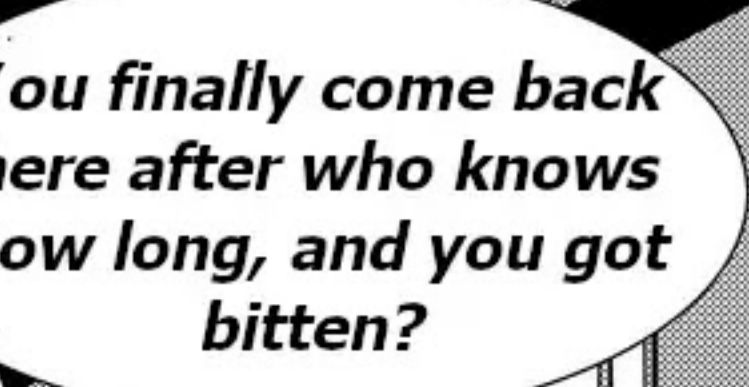




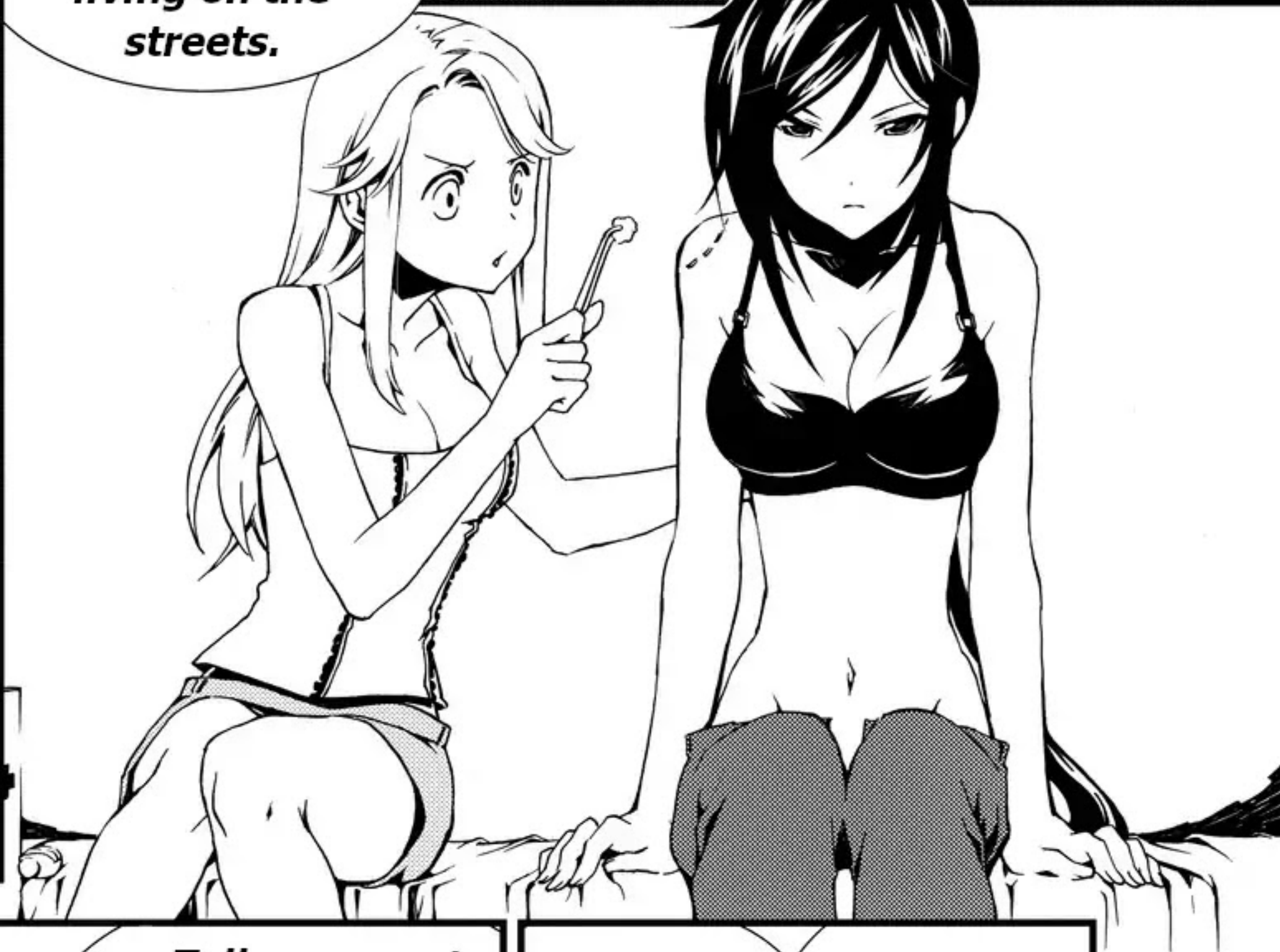
Whoa... What sort of fight were you even in?



You're not some runaway boy living on the streets.



You finally come back here after who knows how long, and you got bitten?



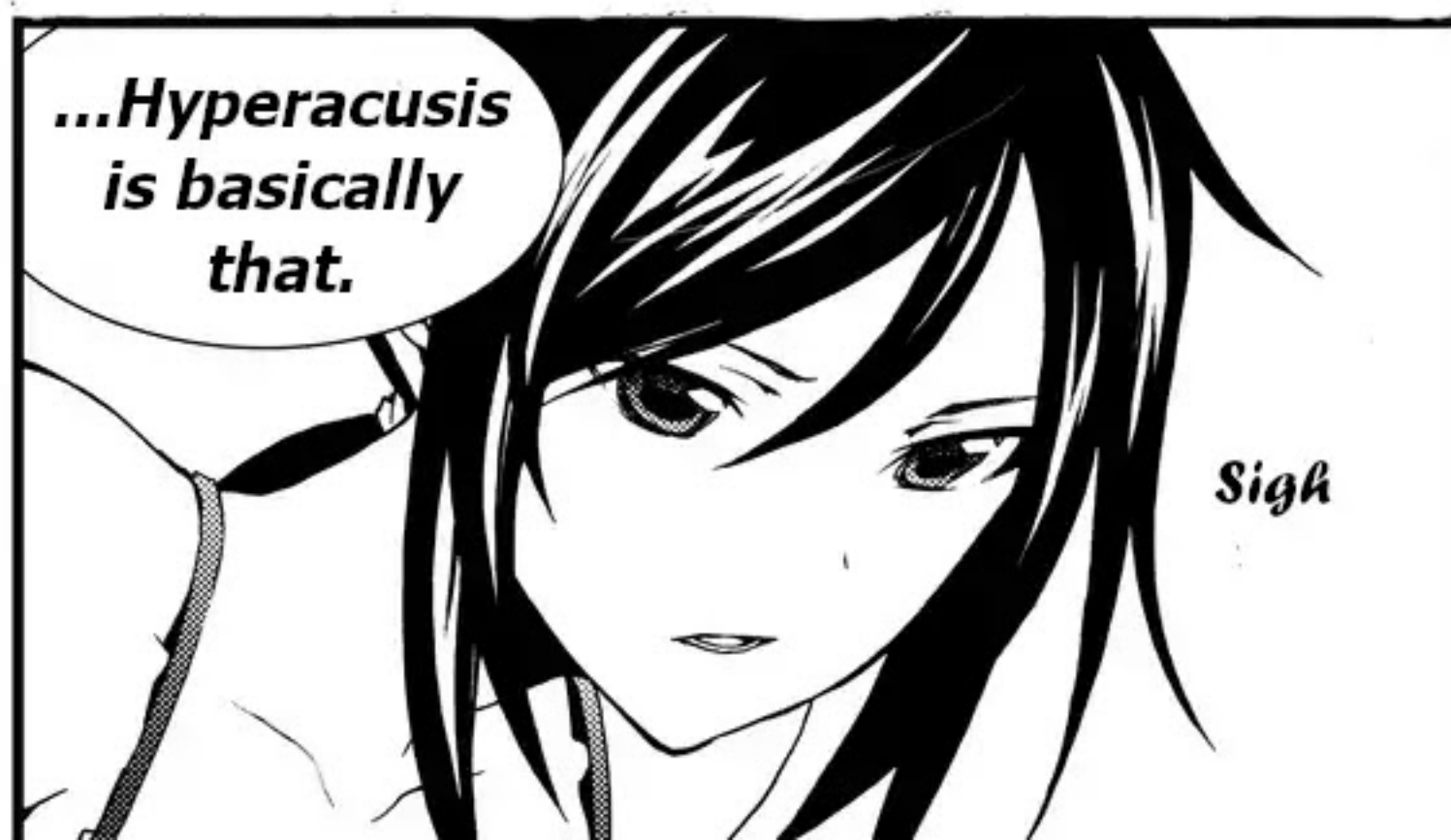
No, what's that?

...Tell me you at least know what the Cocktail Party Effect* is.



Hyper-whatsit?

A kid with hyperacucis bit me.



...Hyperacucis is basically that.

Sigh

*The ability to pay attention to certain sounds within a noisy room. Those suffering from hyperacucis often struggle with it.



*Have you ever
thought about the
world experienced
by bats and
dolphins,*

*The animals who
have the strongest
hearing and use
echolocation?*

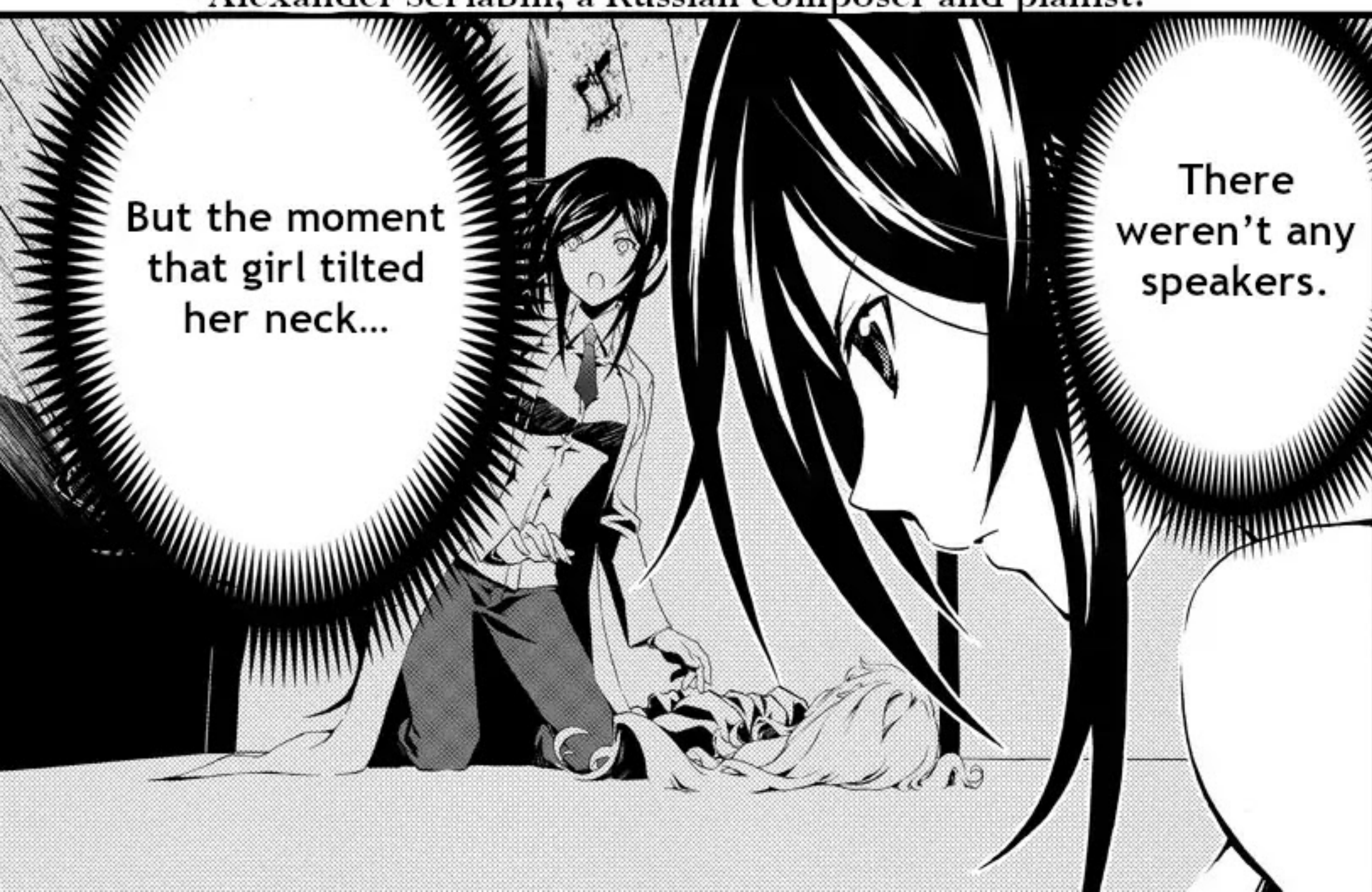
*Or how some
who experience
synesthesia can
hear in color?*

*That was a
world all his
own, one only
he could hear.*

*No matter how many
times I listen to a D-
major chord, I can't
hear the yellow that
Scriabin* heard.*

*...Fine.
Don't tell
me.*

**Alexander Scriabin, a Russian composer and pianist.*



*But the moment
that girl tilted
her neck...*

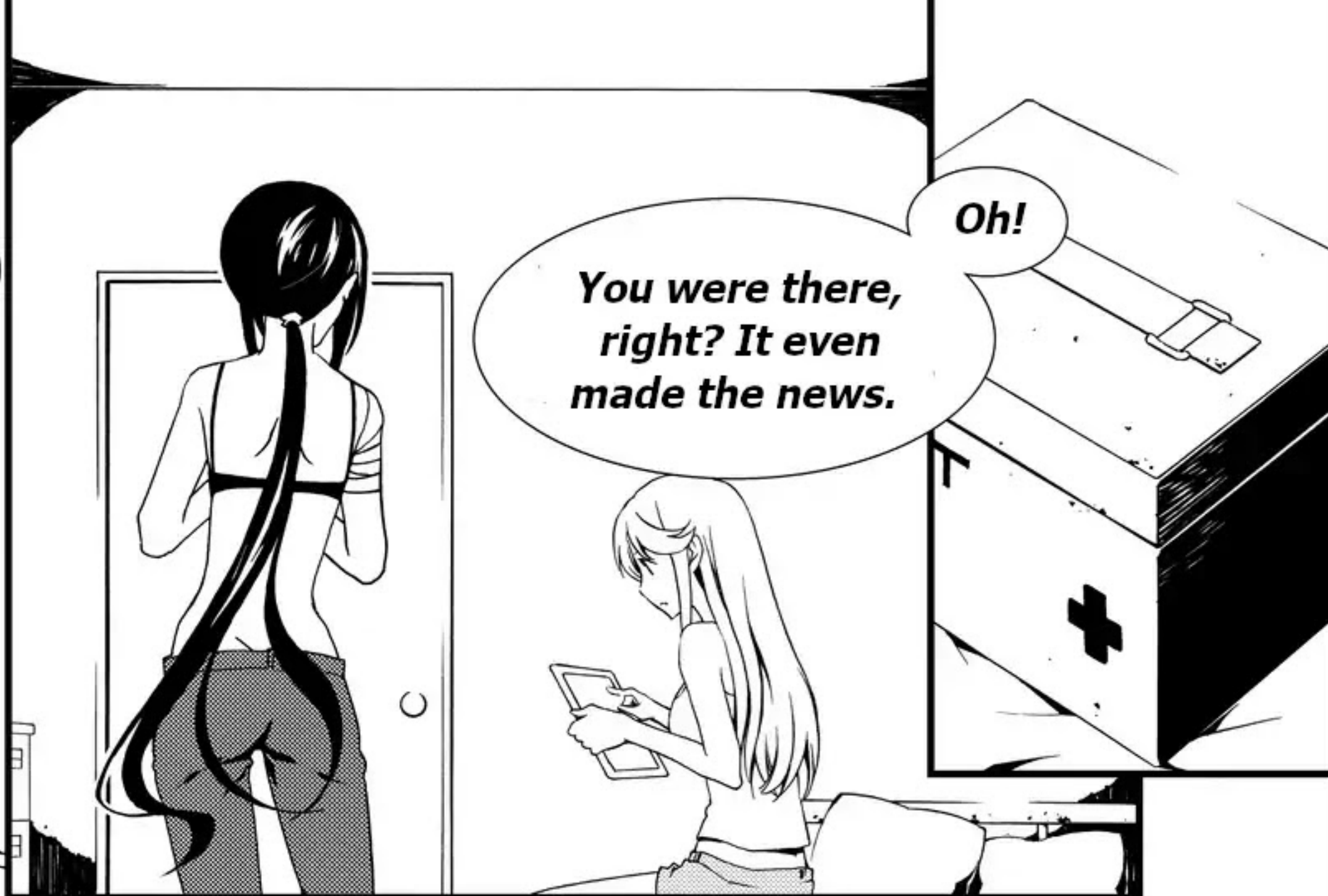
*There
weren't any
speakers.*

Hmph



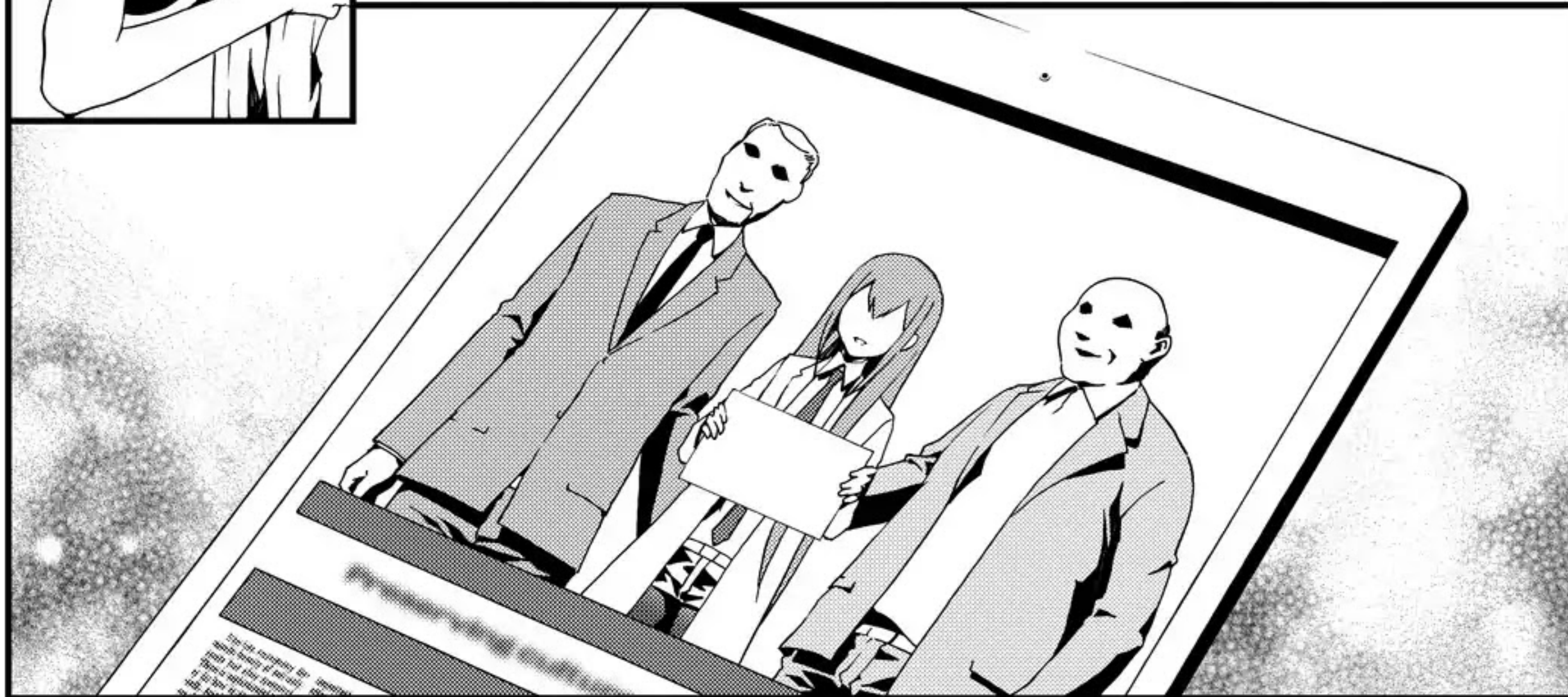


Huh?



*You were there,
right? It even
made the news.*

Oh!



*You both seem
the same to me.*



*... I'm no
genius like
her.*





**We're not the
same! You
have no idea
how hard
I've--**



Ah!



.....

...Sorry.



**They want you to
skip the rest of
high school and
enroll this
semester.**

**I heard the
university dean
called our school
again.**





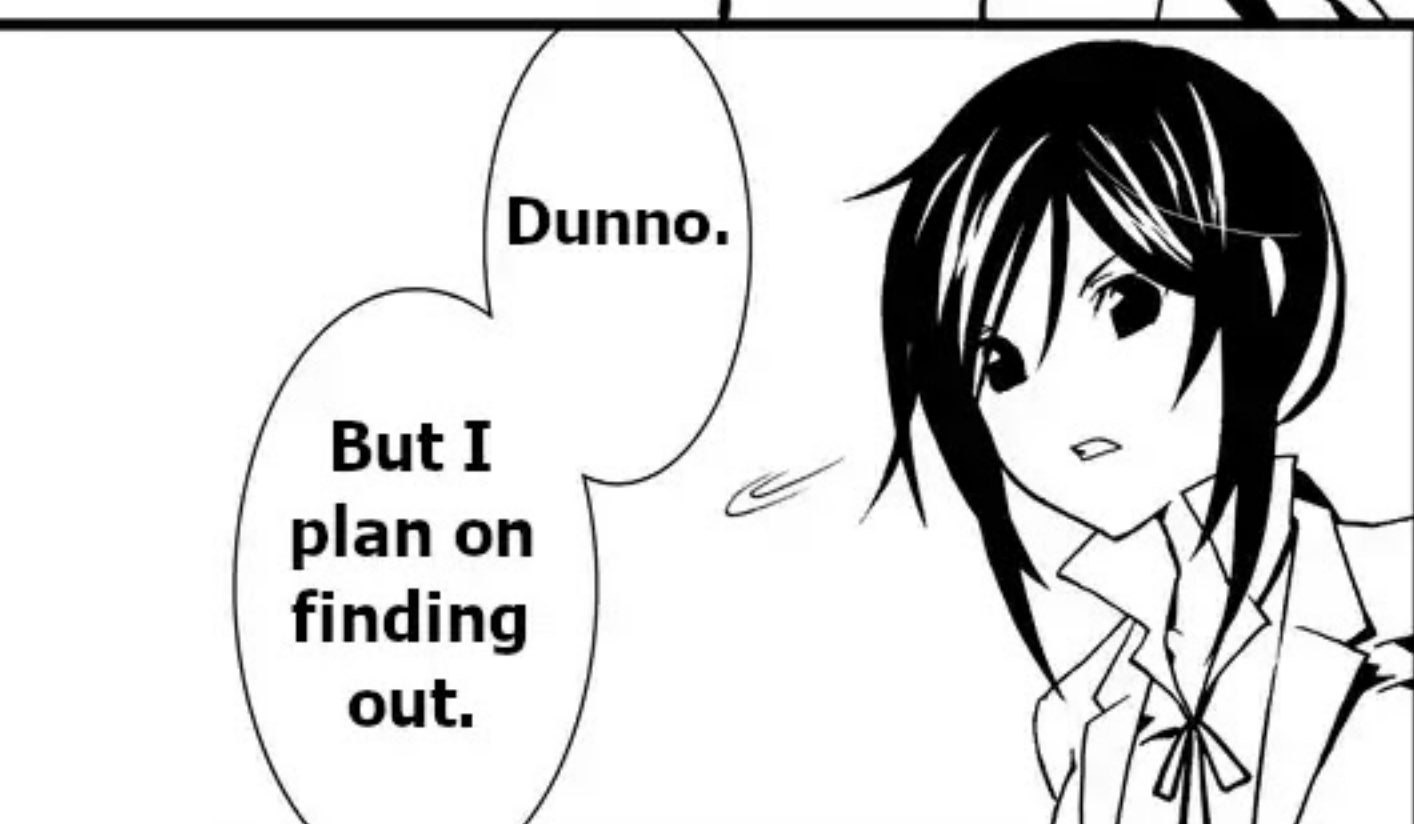
I'm still
saying
nothing
about
becoming a
scientist,
but...

"We must use
logic and reason
as our tools to
question the
riddle that is the
universe."



And I'd
never
even lay a
finger on
it.

I could spend all
my life trying to
fight that riddle
of yours...



Dunno.

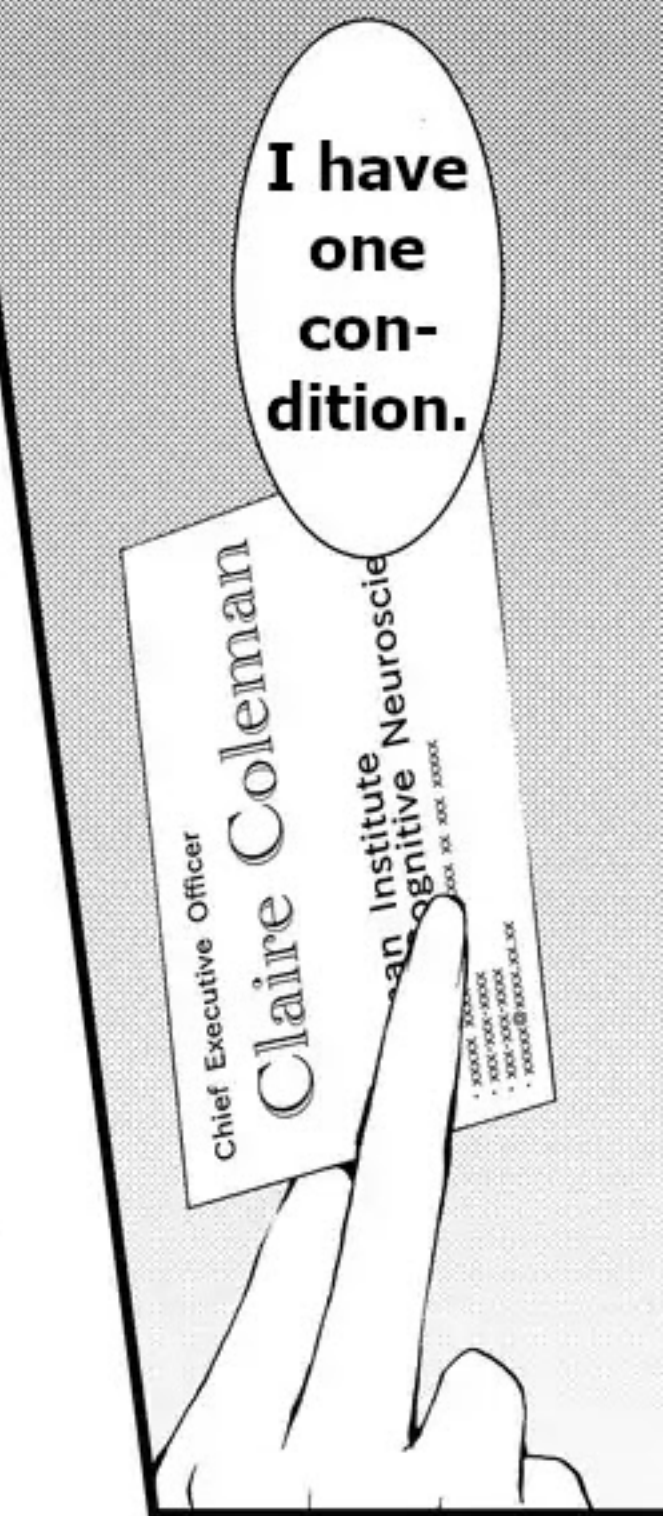
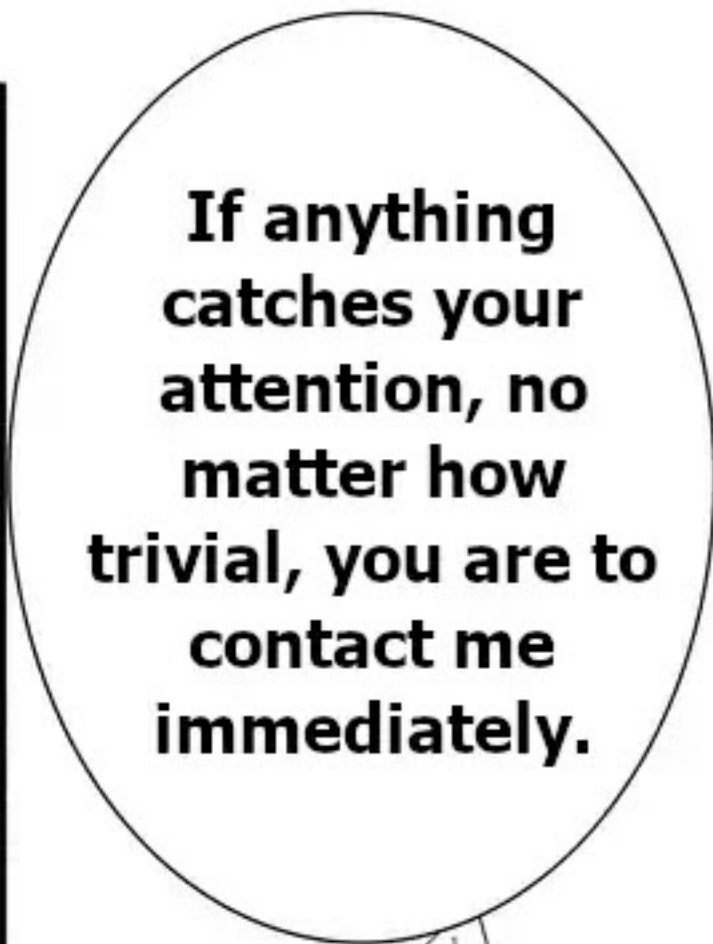
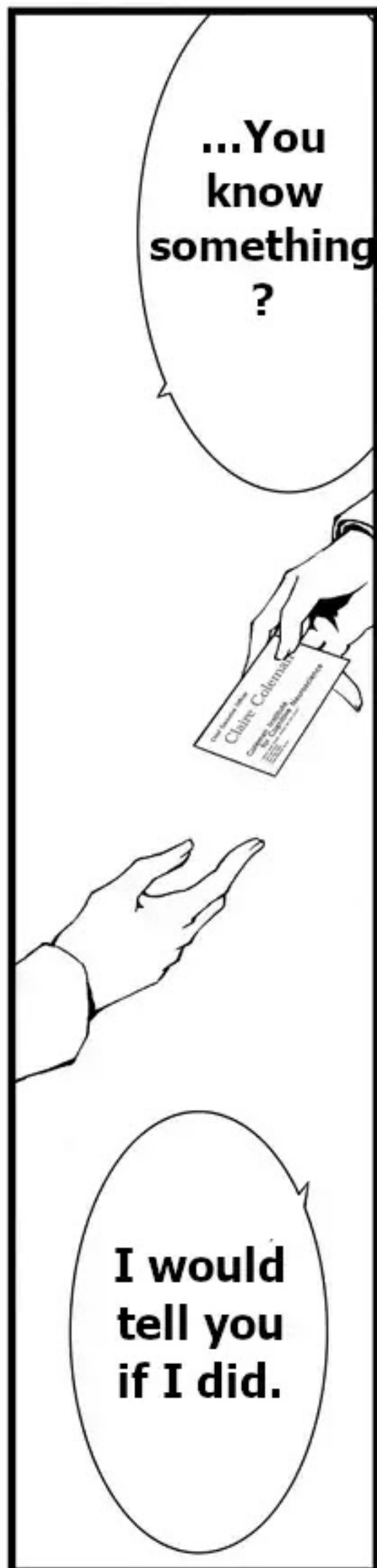
But I
plan on
finding
out.

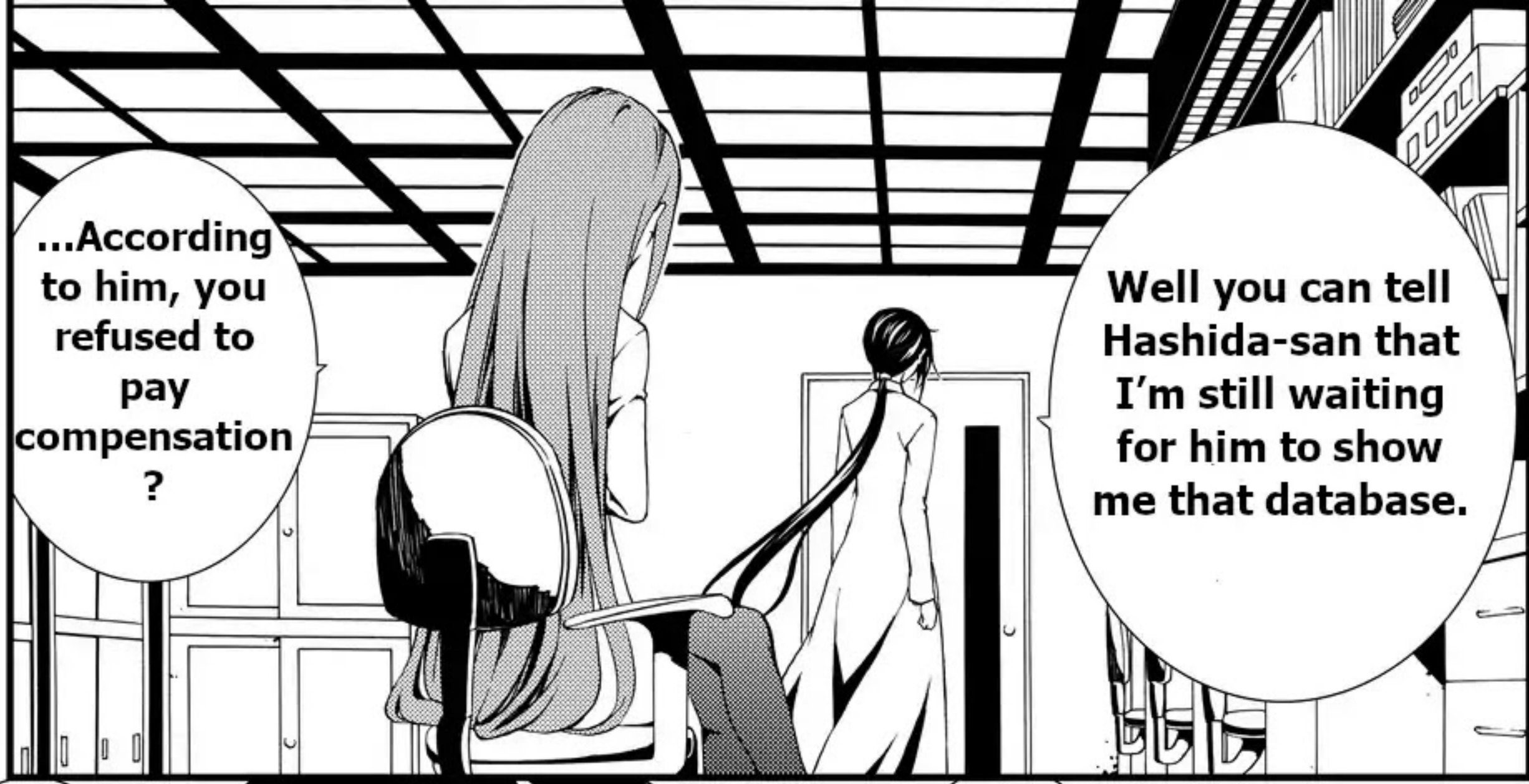


Sigh



...But you
believe a
hint lies
there?





...According to him, you refused to pay compensation?

Well you can tell Hashida-san that I'm still waiting for him to show me that database.



Experience's taught me that.

...You might still have me beat in brains,

But I've got the edge in height, weight, and a feel for when people are up to no good.

I'd sooner drop dead than cosplay as some random anime girl.

Is that what that pervert asked for?



...Do be careful.



Mio,
Please don't forget that condition.



Translator: Dowolf

Typesetter: Quil

Editor: Quil

Scans: Mouse

END